

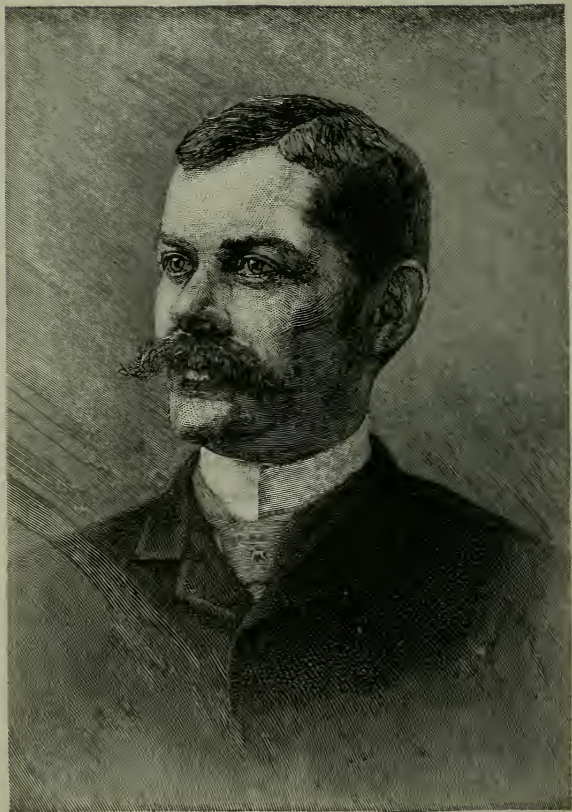


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Stories by American Authors.

IX.

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Thos. A. Page

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Stories by

American Authors

IX.

MARSE CHAN.

By THOMAS NELSON PAGE.

MR. BIXBY'S CHRISTMAS VISITOR.

By CHARLES S. GAGE.

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YOUNG STRONG OF "THE CLARION."

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HOW OLD WIGGINS WORE SHIP.

By CAPTAIN ROLAND T. COFFIN.

"—MAS HAS COME."

By LEONARD KIP.

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MARSE CHAN.

A TALE OF OLD VIRGINIA.

BY THOMAS NELSON PAGE.

ONE afternoon, in the autumn of 1872, I was riding leisurely down the sandy road that winds along the top of the water-shed between two of the smaller rivers of eastern Virginia. The road I was travelling, following "the ridge" for miles, had just struck me as most significant of the character of the race whose only avenue of communication with the outside world it had formerly been. Their once splendid mansions, now fast falling to decay, appeared to view from time to time, set back far from the road, in proud seclusion among groves of oak and hickory now scarlet and gold with the early frost. Distance was nothing to this people; time was of no consequence to them. They desired but a level path in life, and that they

had, though the way was longer and the outer world strode by them as they dreamed.

I was aroused from my reflections by hearing some one ahead of me calling, "Heah!—heah—whoo-oop, heah!"

Turning the curve in the road, I saw just before me a negro standing, with a hoe and a watering-pot in his hand. He had evidently just gotten over the "worm-fence" into the road, out of the path which led zigzag across the "old field" and was lost to sight in the dense growth of sassafras. When I rode up, he was looking anxiously back down this path for his dog. So engrossed was he that he did not even hear my horse, and I reined in to wait until he should turn around and satisfy my curiosity as to the handsome old place half a mile off from the road.

The numerous out-buildings and the large barns and stables told that it had once been the seat of wealth, and the wild waste of sassafras that covered the broad fields gave it an air of desolation that greatly excited my interest. Entirely oblivious of my proximity, the negro went on calling, "Whoo-oop, heah!" until along the path, walking very slowly and with great dignity, appeared a noble-looking old orange and white setter, gray with age, and corpulent with excessive feeding. As soon as he came in sight, his master began:

"Yes, dat you! You gittin' deaf as well as bline, I s'pose! Kyarnt heah me callin', I reckon? Whyn't yo' come on, dawg?"

The setter sauntered slowly up to the fence and stopped without even deigning a look at the speaker, who immediately proceeded to take the rails down, talking meanwhile :

“ Now, I got to pull down de gap, I s’pose ! Yo’ so sp’ilt yo’ kyahn’ hardly walk. Jes’ ez able to git over it as I is ! Jes’ like white folks—t’ink ’cuz you’s white and I’s black, I got to wait on yo’ all de time. Ne’m mine, I ain’ gwi’ do it ! ”

The fence having been pulled down sufficiently low to suit his dogship, he marched sedately through, and, with a hardly perceptible lateral movement of his tail, walked on down the road. Putting up the rails carefully, the negro turned and saw me.

“ Sarvent, marster,” he said, taking his hat off. Then, as if apologetically for having permitted a stranger to witness what was merely a family affair, he added : “ He know I don’ mean nothin’ by what I sez. He’s Marse Chan’s dawg, an’ he’s so ole he kyahn git long no pearter. He know I’s jes’ prodjickin’ wid ’im.”

“ Who is Marse Chan ? ” I asked ; “ and whose place is that over there—and the one a mile or two back—the place with the big gate and the carved stone pillars ? ”

“ Marse Chan,” said the darkey, “ he’s Marse Channin’—my young marster ; an’ dem places—dis one’s Weall’s, an’ de one back dyar wid de rock gate-pos’s is ole Cun’l Chahmb’lin’s. Dey don’ nobody live dyar now, ’cep’ niggers. Arfter

de war some one or nudder bought our place, but his name done kind o' slipped me. I nuvver hearn on 'im befo'; I think dey's half-strainers. I don' ax none on 'em no odds. I lives down de road heah, a little piece, an' I jes' steps down of a even-in' and looks arfter de graves."

"Well, where is Marse Chan?" I asked.

"Hi! don' you know? Marse Chan, he went in de army. I wuz wid 'im. Yo' know he warn' gwine an' lef' Sam."

"Will you tell me all about it?" I said, dismounting.

Instantly, and as if by instinct, the darky stepped forward and took my bridle. I demurred a little; but with a bow that would have honored old Sir Roger, he shortened the reins, and taking my horse from me, led him along.

"Now tell me about Marse Chan," I said.

"Lawd, marster, hit's so long ago, I'd a'most forgit all about it, ef I hedn' been wid him ever sence he wuz born. Ez 'tis, I remembers it jes' like 'twuz yistiddy. Yo' know Marse Chan an' me—we wuz boys togedder. I wuz older'n he wuz, jes' de same ez he wuz whiter'n me. I wuz born plantin' corn time, de spring arfter big Jim an' de six steers got washed away at de upper ford right down dyar b'low de quarters ez he wuz a bringin' de Chris'mas things home; an' Marse Chan, he warn' born tell mos' to der harves' arfter my sister Nancy married Cun'l Chahmb'lin's Torm, 'bout eight years arfterwoods.

“ Well, when Marse Chan wuz born dey wuz de grettes’ doin’s at home you ever did see. De folks all hed holiday, jes’ like in de Chris’mas. Ole marster (we didn’ call ’im *ole* marster tell arfter Marse Chan wuz born—befo’ dat he wuz jes’ de marster, so)—well, ole marster, his face fyar shine wid pleasure, an’ all de folks wuz mighty glad, too, ’cause dey all loved ole marster, and aldo’ dey did step aroun’ right peart when ole marster wuz lookin’ at ’em, dyar warn’ nyar han’ on de place but what, ef he wanted anythin’, would walk up to de back poach, an’ say he warn’ to see de marster. An’ ev’ybody wuz talkin’ ’bout de young marster, an’ de maids an’ de wimmens ’bout de kitchen wuz sayin’ how ’twuz de purties’ chile dey ever see ; an’ at dinner-time de mens (all on ’em hed holiday) come roun’ de poach an’ ax how de missis an’ de young marster wuz, an’ ole marster come out on de poach an’ smile wus’n a ’possum, an’ sez, ‘ Thankee ! Bofe doin’ fust rate, boys ;’ an’ den he stepped back in de house, sort o’ laughin’ to hisse’f, an’ in a minute he come out ag’in wid de baby in he arms, all wrapped up in flannens an’ things, an’ sez, ‘ Heah he is, boys.’ All de folks den, dey went up on de poach to look at ’im, drappin’ dey hats on de steps, an’ scrapin’ dey feets ez dey went up. An’ pres’n’y ole marster, lookin’ down at we all chil’en all packed togedder down deah like a parecel o’ sheep-burrs, cotch sight o’ *me* (he knowed my name, ’cause I use’ to hole he hoss fur ’im sometimes ; but he

didn' know all de chil'en by name, dey wuz so many on 'em), an' he sez, 'Come up heah.' So up I goes tippin', skeered like, an' old marster sez, 'Ain' you Mymie's son?' 'Yass, seh,' sez I. 'Well,' sez he, 'I'm gwine to give you to yo' young Marse Channin' to be his body-servant,' an' he put de baby right in my arms (it's de truth I'm tellin' you !), an' yo' jes' ought to a-heard de folks sayin', 'Lawd ! marster, dat boy'll drap dat chile !' 'Naw, he won't,' sez marster ; 'I kin trust 'im.' And den he sez : 'Now, Sam, from dis time you belong to yo' young Marse Channin' ; I wan' you to tek keer on 'im ez long ez he lives. You are to be his boy from dis time. An' now,' he sez, 'carry 'im in de house.' An' he walks arfter me an' opens de do's fur me, an' I kyars 'im in my arms, an' lays 'im down on de bed. An' from dat time I wuz taken in de house to be Marse Channin's body-servant.

"Well, you nuvver see a chile grow so. Pres'n'y he growed up right big, an' ole marster sez he must have some edication. So he sont 'im to school to ole Miss Lawry down dyar, dis side o' Cun'l Chahmb'lin's, an' I use' to go 'long wid 'im an' tote he books an' we all's snacks ; an' when he larnt to read an' spell right good, an' got 'bout so-o big, old Miss Lawry she died, an' ole marster said he mus' have a man to teach 'im an' trounce 'im. So we all went to Mr. Hall, whar kep' de school-house beyant de creek, an' dyar we went ev'y day, 'cep' Sat'd'ys of co'se, an' sich days

ez Marse Chan din' warn' go, an' ole missis begged 'im off.

"Hit wuz down dyar Marse Chan fust took notice o' Miss Anne. Mr. Hall, he taught gals ez well ez boys, an' Cun'l Chahmb'lin he sont his daughter (dat's Miss Anne I'm talkin' about). She wuz a leetle bit o' gal when she fust come. Yo' see, her ma wuz dead, an' ole Miss Lucy Chahmb'lin, she lived wid her brudder an' kep' house for 'im; an' he wuz so busy wid politics, he didn' have much time to spyar, so he sont Miss Anne to Mr. Hall's by a 'ooman wid a note. When she come dat day in de school-house, an' all de chil'en looked at her so hard, she tu'n right red, an' tried to pull her long curls over her eyes, an' den put bofe de backs of her little han's in her two eyes, an' begin to cry to herse'f. Marse Chan he was settin' on de een' o' de bench nigh de do', an' he jes' reached out an' put he arm roun' her an' drawed her up to 'im. An' he kep' whisperin' to her, an' callin' her name, an' coddlin' her; an' pres'n'y she took her han's down an' begin to laugh.

"Well, dey 'peared to tek' a gre't fancy to each udder from dat time. Miss Anne she warn' nuthin' but a baby hardly, an' Marse Chan he wuz a good big boy 'bout mos' thirteen years ole, I reckon. Hows'ever, dey sut'n'y wuz sot on each udder an' (yo' heah me!) ole marster an' Cun'l Chahmb'lin dey 'peared to like it 'bout well ez de chil'en. Yo' see Cun'l Chahmb'lin's place

j'ined oun, an' it looked jes' ez natural fur dem two chil'en to marry an' mek it one plantation, ez it did fur de creek to run down de bottom from our place into Cun'l Chahmb'lin's. I don' rightly think de chil'en thought 'bout gittin' *married*, not den, no mo'n I thought 'bout marryin' Judy when she wuz a little gal at Cun'l Chahmb'lin's, runnin' 'bout de house, huntin' fur Miss Lucy's spectacles ; but dey wuz good frien's from de start. Marse Chan he use' to kyar Miss Anne's books fur her ev'y day, an' ef de road wuz muddy or she wuz tired, he use' to tote her ; an' 'twarn' hardly a day passed dat he didn' kyar her some'n' to school—apples or hick'y nuts, or some'n'. He wouldn' let none o' de chil'en tease her, nudder. Heh ! One day, one o' de boys poked he finger at Miss Anne, an' arfter school Marse Chan he axed 'im 'roun' hine de school-house out o' sight, an' ef he didn' whop 'im !

“ Marse Chan, he wuz de peartes' scholar ole Mr. Hall hed, an' Mr. Hall he wuz mighty proud o' 'im. I don' think he use' to beat 'im ez much ez he did de udders, aldo' he wuz de head in all debilment dat went on, jes' ez he wuz in sayin' he lessons.

“ Heh ! one day in summer, jes' 'fo' de school broke up, dyah come up a storm right sudden, an' riz de creek (dat one yo' cross' back yonder), an' Marse Chan he toted Miss Anne home on he back. He ve'y off'n did dat when de parf wuz muddy. But dis day when dey come to de creek,

it had done washed all de logs 'way. 'Twuz still mighty high, so Marse Chan he put Miss Anne down, an' he took a pole an' waded right in. Hit took 'im long up to de shoulders. Den he waded back, an' took Miss Anne up on his head an' kyared her right over. At fust she wuz skeered ; but he tol' her he could swim an' wouldn' let her git hu't, an' den she let 'im kyar her 'cross, she hol'in' his han's. I warn' 'long dat day, but he sut'n'y did dat thing.

“ Ole marster he wuz so pleased 'bout it, he giv' Marse Chan a pony ; an' Marse Chan rode 'im to school de day arfter he come, so proud, an' sayin' how he wuz gwine to let Anne ride behine 'im ; an' when he come home dat evenin' he wuz walkin'. 'Hi ! where's yo' pony?' said ole marster. 'I give 'im to Anne,' says Marse Chan. 'She liked 'im, an'—I kin walk.' 'Yes,' sez ole marster, laughin', 'I s'pose you's already done giv' her yo'se'f, an' nex' thing I know you'll be givin' her this plantation and all my niggers.'

“ Well, about a fortnight or sich a matter arfter dat, Cun'l Chahmb'lin sont over an' invited all o' we all over to dinner, an' Marse Chan wuz 'spressly named in de note whar Ned brought ; an' arfter dinner he made ole Phil, whar wuz his ker'ige-driver, bring roun' Marse Chan's pony wid a little side-saddle on 'im, an' a beautiful little hoss wid a bran'-new saddle an' bridle on 'im ; an' he gits up an' meks Marse Chan a gre't speech, an' presents 'im de little hoss ; an' den he calls Miss

Anne, an' she comes out on de poach in a little ridin' frock, an' dey puts her on her pony, an' Marse Chan mounts his hoss, an' dey goes to ride, while de grown folks is a-laughin' an' chattin' an' smokin' dey cigars.

"Dem wuz good ole times, marster—de bes' Sam ever see! Dey wuz, in fac'! Niggers didn' hed nothin' 't all to do—jes' hed to 'ten' to de feedin', an' cleanin' de hosses, an' doin' what de marster tell 'em to do; an' when dey wuz sick, dey had things sont 'em out de house, an' de same doctor come to see 'em whar 'ten' to de white folks when dey wuz po'ly. Dyar warn' no trouble nor nothin'.

"Well, things tuk a change arfter dat. Marse Chan he went to de bo'din' school, whar he use' to write to me constant. Ole missis use' to read me de letters, an' den I'd git Miss Anne to read 'em ag'in to me when I'd see her. He use' to write to her too, an' she use' to write to him too. Den Miss Anne she wuz sont off to school too. An' in de summer time dey'd bofe come home, an' yo' hardly knowed whether Marse Chan lived at home or over at Cun'l Chahmb'lin's. He wuz over dyah constant. 'Twuz always ridin' or fishin' down dyah, in de river; or sometimes he' go over dyah, an' 'im an' she'd go out an' set in de yard onder de trees; she settin' up mekin' out she wuz knittin' some sort o' bright-cullored some'n', wid de grarss growin' all up 'g'inst her, an' her hat th'owed back on her neck, an' he readin' to her

out books ; an' sometimes dey'd bofe read out de same book, fust one an' den todder. I use' to see 'em ! Dat wuz when dey wuz growin' up like.

“ Den ole marster he run for Congress, an' ole Cun'l Chahmb'lin he wuz put up to run 'g'inst ole marster by de Dimicrats ; but ole marster he beat 'im. Yo' know he wuz gwine do dat ! Co'se he wuz ! Dat made ole Cun'l Chahmb'lin mighty mad, and dey stopt visitin' each udder reg'lar, like dey had been doin' all 'long. Den Cun'l Chahmb'lin he sort o' got in debt, an' sell some o' he niggers, an' dat's de way de fuss begun. Dat's whar de lawsuit cum from. Ole marster he didn' like nobody to sell niggers, an' knowin' dat Cun'l Chahmb'lin wuz sellin' o' his, he writ an' offered to buy his M'ria an' all her chil'en, 'cause she hed married our Zeek'yel. An' don' yo' t'ink, Cun'l Chahmb'lin axed ole marster mo' 'n th'ee niggers wuz wuth fur M'ria. Befo' old marster bought her, dough, de sheriff cum an' levelled on M'ria an' a whole parecel o' udder niggers. Ole marster he went to de sale, an' bid for 'em ; but Cun'l Chahmb'lin he got some one to bid 'g'inst ole marster. Dey wuz knocked out to ole marster dough, an' den dey hed a big lawsuit, an' ole marster wuz agwine to co't, off an' on, fur some years, till at lars' de co't decided dat M'ria belonged to ole marster. Ole Cun'l Chahmb'lin den wuz so mad he sued ole marster for a little strip o' lan' down dyah on de line fence, whar he said belonged to 'im. Evy'body knowed hit belonged

to ole marster. Ef yo' go down dyah now, I kin show it to yo', inside de line fence, whar it hed done bin ever since long befo' ole marster wuz born. But Cun'l Chahmb'lin wuz a mons'us perseverin' man, an' ole marster he wouldn' let nobody run over 'im. No, dat he wouldn'! So dey wuz agwine down to co't about dat, fur I don' know how long, till ole marster beat 'im.

"All dis time, yo' know, Marse Chan wuz agoin' back'ads an' for'ads to college, an' wuz growed up a ve'y fine young man. He wuz a ve'y likely gent'man! Miss Anne she hed done mos' growed up, too—wuz puttin' her hyar up like ole missis use' to put hers up, an' 't wuz jes' ez bright ez de sorrel's mane when de sun cotch on it, an' her eyes wuz gre't big dark eyes, like her pa's, on'y bigger an' not so fierce, an' 'twarn' none o' de young ladies ez purty ez she wuz. She an' Marse Chan still set a heap o' sto' by one 'nudder, but I don' t'ink dey wuz easy wid each udder ez when he used to tote her home from school on his back. Marse Chan he use' to love de ve'y groun' she walked on, dough, in my 'pinion. Heh! His face 'twould light up whenever she come into chu'ch, or anywhere, jes' like de sun hed come th'oo a chink on it suddenly.

"Den ole marster lost he eyes. D'yo' ever hyah 'bout dat? Heish! Didn' yo'? Well, one night de big barn cotch fire. De stables, yo' know, wuz under de big barn, an' all de hosses wuz in dyah. Hit 'peared to me like 'twarn' no time befo'

all de folks an' de neighbors dey come, an' dey wuz a-totin' water, an' a-tryin' to save de po' critters, an' dey got a heap on 'em out ; but de ker'ige-hosses dey wouldn' come out, an' dey wuz a-runnin' back'ads an' for'ads inside de stalls, a-nikerin' an' a-screamin', like dey knowed dey time hed come. Yo' could heah 'em so pitiful, an' pres'n'y ole marster said to Ham Fisher (he wuz de ker'ige-driver), 'Go in dyah an' try to save 'em ; don' let 'em bu'n to death.' An' Ham he went right in. An' jes' arfter he got in, de shed whar it hed fus' cotch fell in, an' de sparks shot 'way up in de air ; an' Ham didn' come back, an' de fire begun to lick out under de eaves over whar de ker'ige hosses' stalls wuz, an' all of a sudden ole marster tu'ned and kissed ole missis, who wuz standin' nigh him, wid her face jes' ez white ez a sperit's, an', befo' anybody knowed what he wuz gwine do, jumped right in de do', an' de smoke come po'in' out behine 'im. Well, seh, I nuvver 'specks to hyah tell Judgment sich a soun' ez de folks set up. Ole missis she jes' drapt down on her knees in de mud an' prayed out loud. Hit 'peared like her pra'r wuz heard ; for in a minit, right out de same do', kyarin' Ham Fisher in his arms, come ole marster, wid his clo'es all blazin'. Dey flung water on 'im, an' put 'im out ; an', ef you b'lieve me, yo' wouldn' a-knowed 'twuz ole marster. Yo' see, he hed find Ham Fisher done fall down in de smoke right by de ker'ige-hoss' stalls, whar he sont him, an' he hed to tote 'im

back in his arms th'oo de fire what hed done cotch de front part o' de stable, an' to keep de flame from gittin' down Ham Fisher's th'ote he hed tuk off his own hat and mashed it all over Ham Fisher's face, an' he hed kep' Ham Fisher from bein' so much bu'nt; but *he* wuz bu'nt dreadful! His beard an' hyar wuz all nyawed off, an' his face an' han's an' neck wuz scorified terrible. Well, he jes' laid Ham Fisher down, an' then he kind o' staggered for'ad, an' ole missis ketch' 'im in her arms. Ham Fisher, he warnt bu'nt so bad, an' he got out in a month or two; an' arfter a long time, ole marster he got well, too; but he wuz always stone bline arfter dat. He nuvver could see none from dat night.

"Marse Chan he comed home from college toreckly, an' he sut'n'y did nuss ole marster faithful—jes' like a 'ooman. Den he took charge o' de plantation arfter dat; an' I use' to wait on 'im jes' like when we wuz boys togedder; an' sometimes we'd slip off an' have a fox-hunt, an' he'd be jes' like he wuz in ole times, befo' ole marster got bline, an' Miss Anne Chahmb'lin stopt comin' over to our house, an' settin' onder de trees, readin' out de same book.

"He sut'n'y wuz good to me. Nothin' nuvver made no diffunce 'bout dat. He nuvver hit me a lick in his life—an' nuvver let nobody else do it, nudder.

"I 'members one day, when he wuz a leetle bit o' boy, ole marster hed done tole we all chil'en not

to slide on de straw-stacks ; an' one day me an' Marse Chan thought ole marster hed done gone 'way from home. We watched him git on he hoss an' ride up de road out o' sight, an' we wuz out in de field a-slidin' an' a-slidin', when up comes ole marster. We started to run ; but he hed done see us, an' he called us to come back ; an' sich a whoppin' ez he did gi' us !

“ Fust he took Marse Chan, an' den he teched me up. He nuvver hu't me, but in co'se I wuz a-hollerin' ez hard ez I could stave it, 'cause I knowed dat wuz gwine mek him stop. Marse Chan he hed'n open he mouf long ez ole marster wuz tunin' 'im ; but soon ez he commence warmin' me an' I begin to holler, Marse Chan he bu'st out cryin', an' stept right in befo' ole marster, an' ketchin' de whop, sed :

“ ‘ Stop, seh ! Yo' sha'n't whop 'im ; he b'longs to me, an' ef you hit 'im another lick I'll set 'im free ! ’

“ I wish yo' hed see ole marster. Marse Chan he warn' mo'n eight years ole, an' dyah dey wuz—ole marster stan'in' wid he whop raised up, an' Marse Chan red an' cryin', hol'in' on to it, an' sayin' I b'longst to 'im.

“ Ole marster, he raise' de whop, an' den he drapt it, an' broke out in a smile over he face, an' he chuck' Marse Chan onder der chin, an' tu'n right roun' an' went away, laughin' to hisse'f, an' I heah' 'im tellin' ole missis dat evenin', an' laughin' 'bout it.

“ ‘Twan’ so mighty long arfter dat when dey fust got to talkin’ ‘bout de war. Dey wuz a-dictatin’ back’ads an’ for’ads ‘bout it fur two or th’ee years ‘fo’ it come sho’ nuff, you know. Ole marster, he wuz a Whig, an’ of co’s’e Marse Chan he tuk after he pa. Cun’l Chahmb’lin, he wuz a Dimicrat. He wuz in favor of de war, an’ ole marster and Marse Chan dey wuz agin’ it. Dey wuz a-talkin’ ‘bout it all de time, an’ purty soon Cun’l Chahmb’lin he went about ev’vywhar speakin’ an’ noratin’ ‘bout Ferginia ought to secede ; an’ Marse Chan he wuz picked up to talk agin’ ‘im. Dat wuz de way dey come to fight de duil. I sut’n’y wuz skeered fur Marse Chan dat mawnin’, an’ he was jes’ ez cool ! Yo’ see, it happen so : Marse Chan he wuz a-speakin’ down at de Deep Creek Tavern, an’ he kind o’ got de bes’ of ole Cun’l Chahmb’lin. All de white folks laughed an’ hoorawed, an’ ole Cun’l Chahmb’lin—my Lawd ! I t’ought he’d ‘a’ bu’st, he wuz so mad. Well, when it come to his time to speak, he jes’ light into Marse Chan. He call ‘im a traitor, an’ a ab’litionis’, an’ I don’ know what all. Marse Chan, he jes’ kep’ cool till de ole Cun’l light into he pa. Ez soon ez he name ole marster, I seen Marse Chan sort o’ lif’ up he head. D’ yo’ ever see a hoss rar he head up right sudden at night when he see somethin’ comin’ to’ds ‘im from de side an’ he don’ know what ‘tis ? Ole Cun’l Chahmb’lin, he went right on. He said ole marster hed taught Marse Chan ; dat ole marster wuz a wuss ab’lition-

is' dan he son. I looked at Marse Chan, an' sez to myse'f : ' Fo' Gord ! old Cun'l Chahmb'lin better min', an' I hedn' got de wuds out, when ole Cun'l Chahmb'lin 'cuse' ole marster o' cheatin' 'im out o' he niggers, an' stealin' piece o' he lan'—dat's de lan' I tole you 'bout. Well, seh, nex' thing I knowed, I heahed Marse Chan—hit all happen right 'long togedder, like lightnin' an' thunder when dey hit right at you—I heah 'im say :

“ Cun'l Chahmb'lin, what you say is false, an' yo' know it to be so. You have wilfully slandered one of the pures' an' nobles' men Gord ever made, an' nothin' but yo' gray hyars protects you.'

“ Well, ole Cun'l Chahmb'lin, he ra'ed an' he pitch'd. He said he wan' too ole, an' he'd show 'im so.

“ ‘ Ve'y well,' says Marse Chan.

“ De meetin' broke up den. I wuz hol'in de hosses out dyar in de road by de een' o' de poach, an' I see Marse Chan talkin' an' talkin' to Mr. Gordon an' anudder gent'man, an' den he come out an' got on de sorrel an' galloped off. Soon ez he got out o' sight, he pulled up, an' we walked along tell we come to de road whar leads off to'ds Mr. Barbour's. He wuz de big lawyer o' de country. Dar he tu'ned off. All dis time he hedn' sed a wud, 'cep' to kind o' mumble to hisse'f now an' den. When we got to Mr. Barbour's, he got down an' went in. Dat wuz in de late winter ; de folks wuz jes' beginnin' to plough fur corn. He stayed dyar 'bout two hours, an' when he come out

Mr. Barbour come out to de gate wid 'im an' shake han's arfter he got up in de saddle. Den we all rode off. 'Twuz late den—good dark ; an' we rid ez hard ez we could, tell we come to de ole school-house at ole Cun'l Chahmb'lin's gate. When we got dar Marse Chan got down an' walked right slow 'roun' de house. Arfter lookin' 'roun' a little while an' tryin' de do' to see ef it wuz shet, he walked down de road tell he got to de creek. He stop' dyar a little while an' picked up two or three little rocks an' frowed 'em in, an' pres'n'y he got up an' we come on home. Ez he got down, he tu'ned to me an', rubbin' de sorrel's nose, said : ' Have 'em well fed, Sam ; I'll want 'em early in de mawnin'.'

“ Dat night at supper he laugh an' talk, an' he set at de table a long time. Arfter ole marster went to bed, he went in de charmber an' set on de bed by 'im talkin' to 'im an' tellin' 'im 'bout de meetin' an' ev'ything ; but he never mention ole Cun'l Chahmb'lin's name. When he got up to come out to de office in de yard, whar he slept, he stooped down an' kissed 'im jes' like he wuz a baby layin' dyar in de bed, an' he'd hardly let ole missis go at all. I knowed some'n wuz up, an' nex' mawnin' I called 'im early befo' light, like he tole me, an' he dressed an' come out pres'n'y jes' like he wuz goin' to chu'ch. I had de hosses ready, an' we went out de back way to'ds de river. Ez we rode along, he said :

“ ‘ Sam, you an' I wuz boys togedder, wa'n't we ? ’

“ ‘ Yes,’ sez I, ‘ Marse Chan, dat we wuz.’

“ ‘ You have been ve’y faithful to me,’ sez he, ‘ an’ I have seen to it that you are well provided fur. You wan’ to marry Judy, I know, an’ you’ll be able to buy her ef you want to.’

“ Den he tole me he wuz goin’ to fight a duil, an’ in case he should git shot, he had set me free an’ giv’ me nuff to tek keer o’ me an’ my wife ez long ez we lived. He said he’d like me to stay an’ tek keer o’ ole marster an’ ole missis ez long ez dey lived, an’ he said it wouldn’ be very long, he reckoned. Dat wuz de on’y time he voice broke—when he said dat ; an’ I couldn’ speak a wud, my th’oat choked me so.

“ When we come to de river, we tu’ned right up de bank, an’ arfter ridin’ ’bout a mile or sich a matter, we stopped whar dey wuz a little clearin’ wid elder bushes on one side an’ two big gum trees on de udder, an’ de sky wuz all red, an’ de water down to’ds whar de sun wuz comin’ wuz jes’ like de sky.

“ Pres’n’y Mr. Gordon he come wid a ’hogany box ’bout so big ’fore ’im, an’ he got down, an’ Marse Chan tole me to tek all de hosses an’ go ’roun’ behine de bushes whar I tell you ’bout—off to one side ; an’ ’fore I got ’roun’ dar, ole Cun’l Chahmb’lin an’ Mr. Hennin an’ Dr. Call come ridin’ from tudder way, to’ds ole Cun’l Chahmb’lin’s. When dey hed tied dey hosses, de udder gent’mens went up to whar Mr. Gordon wuz, an’ arfter some chattin’ Mr. Hennin step’ off ’bout fur ez ’cross dis road, or mebbe it mout be a

little funder ; an' den I seed 'em th'oo de bushes loadin' de pistils, an' talk' a little while ; an' den Marse Chan an' ole Cun'l Chahmb'lin walked up wid de pistils in dey han's, an' Marse Chan he stood wid his face right to'ds de sun. I seen it shine on 'im jes' ez it come up over de low groun's, an' he look' like he did sometimes when he come out of chu'ch. I wuz so skeered I couldn' say nuthin'. Ole Cun'l Chahmb'lin could shoot fust rate, an' Marse Chan he never missed.

“ Den I heard Mr. Gordon say, ‘ Gent'mens, is yo' ready ? ’ and bofe of 'em sez, ‘ Ready, ’ jes' so.

“ An' he sez, ‘ Fire, one, two ’—an' ez he said ‘ one, ’ ole Cun'l Chahmb'lin raised he pistil an' shot right at Marse Chan. De ball went th'oo his hat. I seen he hat sort o' settle on he head ez de bullit hit it, an' *he* jes' tilted his pistil up in de a'r an' shot—*bang* ; an' ez de pistil went *bang*, he sez to Cun'l Chahmb'lin, ‘ I mek you a present to yo' fam'ly, seh ! ’

“ Well, dey had some talkin' arfter dat. I didn' git rightly what it wuz ; but it 'peared like Cun'l Chahmb'lin he warn't satisfied, an' wanted to have anudder shot. De seconds dey wuz talkin', an' pres'n'y dey put de pistils up, an' Marse Chan an' Mr. Gordon shook han's wid Mr. Hennin an' Dr. Call, an' come an' got on dey hosses. An' Cun'l Chahmb'lin he got on his horse an' rode away wid de udder gent'mens, lookin' like he did de day befo' when all de people laughed at 'im.

“ I b’lieve ole Cun’l Chahmb’lin wan’ to shoot Marse Chan, anyway !

“ We come on home to breakfast, I totin’ de box wid de pistils befo’ me on the roan. Would you b’lieve me, seh, Marse Chan he nuvver said a wud ’bout it to ole marster or nobody. Ole missis didn’ fin’ out ’bout it for mo’n a month, an’ den, Lawd ! how she did cry and kiss Marse Chan ; an’ ole marster, aldo’ he never say much, he wuz jes’ ez please’ ez ole missis. He call’ me in de room an’ made me tole ’im all ’bout it, an’ when I got th’oo he gi’ me five dollars an’ a pyar of breeches.

“ But ole Cun’l Chahmb’lin he nuvver did forgive Marse Chan, and Miss Anne she got mad too. Wimmens is mons’us onreasonable nohow. Dey’s jes’ like a catfish : you can n’ tek’ hole on ’em like udder folks, an’ when you gits ’m yo’ can n’ always hole ’em.

“ What meks me think so ? Heaps o’ things—dis : Marse Chan he done gi’ Miss Anne her pa jes’ ez good ez I gi’ Marse Chan’s dawg sweet ’taters, an’ she git mad wid ’im ez if he hed kill ’im ’stid o’ sen’in’ ’im back to her dat mawnin’ whole an’ soun’. B’lieve me ! she wouldn’ even speak to ’im arfter dat !

“ Don’ I ’member dat mawnin’ !

“ We wuz gwine fox huntin’, ’bout six weeks or sich a matter arfter de duil, an’ we met Miss Anne ridin’ ’long wid anudder lady an’ two gent’mens whar wuz stayin’ at her house. Dyar wuz always

some one or nudder dyar co'ting her. Well, dat mawnin' we meet 'em right in de road. 'Twuz de fust time Marse Chan had see her sence de duil, an' he raises he hat ez he pahss, an' she looks right at 'im wid her head up in de yair like she nuvver see 'im befo' in her born days; an' when she comes by me, she sez, 'Good-mawnin', Sam!' Gord! I nuvver see nuthin' like de look dat come on Marse Chan's face when she pahss 'im like dat. He gi' de sorrel a pull dat fotch 'im back settin' down in de san' on he hanches. He ve'y lips wuz white. I tried to keep up wid 'im, but 'twarn' no use. He sont me back home pres'n'y, an' he rid on. I sez to myself, 'Cun'l Chahmb'lin, don' yo' meet Marse Chan dis mawnin'. He ain' bin lookin' 'roun' de ole school-house, whar he an' Miss Anne use' to go to school to ole Mr. Hall together, fur nuffin'. He won' stan' no prod-jickin' to-day.'

"He nuvver come home dat night tell 'way late, an' ef he'd been fox-huntin' it mus' ha' been de ole red whar lives down in de greenscum mashes he'd been chasin'. De way de sorrel wuz gormed up wid sweat an' mire sut'n'y did hu't me. He walked up to de stable wid he head down all de way, an' I'se seen 'im go eighty miles of a winter day, an' prance into de stable at night ez fresh ez ef he hed jes' cantered over to ole Cun'l Chahmb'lin's to supper. I nuvver seen a hoss beat so sence I knowed de fetlock from de fo'lock, an' bad ez he wuz he wan' ez bad ez Marse Chan.

“ Whew ! he didn’ git over dat thing, seh—he nuvver did git over it.

“ De war come on jes’ den, an’ Marse Chan wuz elected cap’n ; but he wouldn’ tek it. He said Firginia hadn’ seceded, an’ he wuz gwine stan’ by her. Den dey ’lected Mr. Gordon cap’n.

“ I sut’n’y did wan’ Marse Chan to tek de place, cuz I knowed he wuz gwine tek me wid ’im. He wan’ gwine widout Sam. An’ beside, he look so po’ an’ thin, I thought he wuz gwine die.

“ Of co’sse ole missis she heard ’bout it, an’ she met Miss Anne in de road, an’ cut her jes’ like Miss Anne cut Marse Chan.

“ Ole missis, she wuz proud ez anybody ! So we wuz mo’ strangers dan ef we hadn’ live’ in a hundred miles of each udder. An’ Marse Chan he wuz gittin’ thinner an’ thinner, an’ Firginia she come out, an’ den Marse Chan he went to Richmond an’ listed, an’ come back an’ sey he wuz a private, an’ he didn’ know whe’r he could tek me or not. He writ to Mr. Gordon, hows’ever, and ’twuz decided that when he went I wuz to go ’long an’ wait on him, an’ de cap’n too. I didn’ min’ dat, yo’ know, long ez I could go wid Marse Chan, an’ I like’ Mr. Gordon, anyways.

“ Well, one night Marse Chan come back from de offis wid a telegram dat say, ‘ Come at once,’ so he wuz to start nex’ mawnin’. He uniform wuz all ready, gray wid yaller trimmin’s, an’ mine wuz ready too, an’ he had ole marster’s sword, whar de State gi’ ’im in de Mexikin war ; an’ he trunks

wuz all packed wid ev'rything in 'em, an' my chist wuz packed too, an' Jim Rasher he druv 'em over to de depo' in de waggin, an' we wuz to start nex' mawnin' 'bout light. Dis wuz 'bout de las' o' spring, you know. Dat night ole missis made Marse Chan dress up in he uniform, an' he sut'n'y did look splendid wid he long mustache an' he wavin' hyar and he tall figger.

"Arfter supper he come down an' sez : ' Sam, I wan' you to tek dis note an' kyar it over to Cun'l Chahmb'lin's, an' gi' it to Miss Anne wid yo' own han's, an' bring me wud what she sez. Don' let any one know 'bout it, or know why you've gone.' ' Yes, seh,' sez I.

"Yo' see, I knowed Miss Anne's maid over at ole Cun'l Chahmb'lin's—dat wuz Judy whar is my wife now—an' I knowed I could wuk it. So I tuk de roan an' rid over, an' tied 'im down de hill in de cedars, an' I wen' 'roun' to de back yard. 'Twuz a right blowy sort o' night ; de moon wuz jes' risin', but de clouds wuz so big it didn' shine 'cep' th'oo a crack now an' den. I soon foun' my gal, an' arfter tellin' her two or three lies 'bout herse'f, I got her to go in an' ax Miss Anne to come to de do'. When she come, I gi' her de note, an' arfter a little while she bro't me anudder, an' I tole her good-by, an' she gi' me a dollar, an' I come home an' gi' de letter to Marse Chan. He read it, an' tole me to have de hosses ready at twenty minits to twelve at de corner of de garden. An' jes' befo' dat he come out ez ef he wuz gwine to bed,

but instid he come, an' we all struck out to'ds Cun'l Chahmb'lin's. When we got mos' to de gate, de hosses got sort o' skeered, an' I see dey wuz some'n or somebody standin' jes' inside; an' Marse Chan he jumpt off de sorrel an' flung me de bridle and he walked up.

"She spoke fust ('twuz Miss Anne had done come out dyar to meet Marse Chan), an' she sez, jes' ez cold ez a chill, 'Well, seh, I granted your favor. I wished to relieve myse'f of de obligations you placed me under a few months ago, when you made me a present of my father, whom you fust insulted an' then prevented from gittin' satisfaction.'

"Marse Chan he didn' speak fur a minit, an' den he said: 'Who is with you?' (Dat wuz ev'y wud.)

"'No one,' sez she; 'I came alone.'

"'My God!' sez he, 'you didn' come all through those woods by yourse'f at this time o' night?'

"'Yes, I'm not afraid,' sez she. (An' heah dis nigger! I don' b'lieve she wuz.)

"De moon come out, an' I cotch sight o' her stan'in' dyar in her white dress, wid de cloak she had wrapped herse'f up in drapped off on de groun', an' she didn' look like she wuz 'feared o' nuthin'. She wuz mons'us purty ez she stood dyar wid de green bushes behine her, an' she hed jes' a few flowers in her breas'—right hyah—and some leaves in her sorrel hyar; an' de moon come out an' shined down on her hyar an' her frock, an' 'peared like

de light wuz jes' stan'in' off it ez she stood dyar lookin' at Marse Chan wid her head tho'd back, jes' like dat mawnin' when she pahss Marse Chan in de road widout speakin' to 'im, an' sez to me, 'Good mawnin', Sam.'

"Marse Chan, he den tole her he hed come to say good-by to her, ez he wuz gwine 'way to de war nex' mawnin'. I wuz watchin' on her, an' I tho't when Marse Chan tole her dat, she sort o' started an' looked up at 'im like she wuz mighty sorry, an' 'peared like she didn' stan' quite so straight arfter dat. Den Marse Chan he went on talkin' right fars' to her; an' he tole her how he had loved her ever sence she wuz a little bit o' baby mos', an' how he nuvver 'membered de time when he hedn' 'spected to marry her. He tole her it wuz his love for her dat hed made 'im stan' fust at school an' collige, an' hed kep' 'im good an' pure; an' now he wuz gwine 'way, wouldn' she let it be like 'twuz in ole times, an' ef he come back from de war wouldn' she try to t'ink on him ez she use' to do when she wuz a little guirl?

"Marse Chan he had done been talkin' so serious, he hed done tuk Miss Anne's han', an' wuz lookin' down in her face like he wuz list'nin' wid his eyes.

"Arfter a minit Miss Anne she said somethin', an' Marse Chan he cotch her udder han' an' sez:

"'But if you love me, Anne?'

"When he sed dat, she tu'ned her head 'way

from 'im, an' wait' a minit, an' den she sed—right clear :

“ ‘ But I don' love yo'.' (Jes' dem th'ee wuds !) De wuds fall right slow—like dirt falls out a spade on a coffin when yo's buryin' anybody an' seys, ' Uth to uth.' Marse Chan he jes' let her hand drap, an' he stiddy hisse'f 'g'inst de gate-pos', an' he didn' speak toreklly. When he did speak, all he sez wuz :

“ ‘ I mus' see you home safe.'

“ I 'clar, marster, I didn' know 'twuz Marse Chan's voice tell I look at 'im right good. Well, she wouldn' let 'im go wid her. She jes' wrap' her cloak 'roun' her shoulders, an' wen' 'long back by herse'f, widout doin' more'n jes' look up once at Marse Chan leanin' dyah 'g'inst de gate-pos' in he sodger clo'es, wid he eyes on de groun'. She said ' Good-by ' sort o' sorf, an' Marse Chan, widout lookin' up, shake han's wid her, an' she wuz done gone down de road. Soon ez she got 'mos' 'roun' de curve, Marse Chan he followed her, keepin' under de trees so ez not to be seen, an' I led de hosses on down de road behine 'im. He kep' 'long behine her tell she wuz safe in de house, an' den he come an' got on he hoss, an' we all come home.

“ Nex' mawnin' we all come off to j'ine de army. An' dey wuz a-drillin' an' a-drillin' all 'bout for a while an' dey went 'long wid all de res' o' de army, an I went wid Marse Chan an' clean he boots, an' look arfter de tent, an' tek keer o' him

an' de hosses. An' Marse Chan, he wan' a bit like he use' to be. He wuz so solum an' moanful all de time, at leas' 'cep' when dyah wuz gwine to be a fight. Den he'd peartin' up, an' he alwuz rode at de head o' de company 'cause he wuz tall; an' hit wan' on'y in battles whar all his company wuz dat *he* went, but he use' to volunteer whenever de cun'l wanted anybody to fine out anythin', an' 'twuz so dangersome he didn' like to mek one man go no sooner'n anudder, yo' know, an' ax'd who'd volunteer. *He* 'peared to like to go prowlin' aroun' 'mong dem Yankees, an' he use' to tek me wid 'im whenever he could. Yes, seh, he sut'n'y wuz a good sodger! He didn' mine bullets no more'n he did so many draps o' rain. But I use' to be pow'ful skeered sometimes. It jes' use' to 'pear like fun to 'im. In camp he use' to be so sorrerful he'd hardly open he mouf. You'd 'a' tho't he wuz seekin', he used to look so moanful; but jes' le' 'im git into danger, an' he use' to be like ole times—jolly an' laughin' like when he wuz a boy.

“When Cap'n Gordon got he leg shot off, dey mek Marse Chan cap'n on de spot, 'cause one o' de lieutenants got kilt de same day, an' tor'er one (named Mr. Ronny) wan' no 'count, an' all de company sed Marse Chan wuz de man.

“An' Marse Chan he wuz jes' de same. He didn' never mention Miss Anne's name, but I knowed he wuz thinkin' on her constant. One night he wuz settin' by de fire in camp, an' Mr.

Ronny—he wuz de secon' lieutenant—got to talk-in' 'bout ladies, an' he say all sorts o' things 'bout 'em, an' I see Marse Chan kinder lookin' mad ; an' de lieutenant mention Miss Anne's name. He hed been courtin' Miss Anne 'bout de time Marse Chan fit de duil wid her pa, an' Miss Anne hed kicked 'im, dough he wuz mighty rich, 'cause he warn' nuthin' but a half-strainer, an' 'cause she like Marse Chan, I believe, dough she didn' speak to 'im ; an' Mr. Ronny he got drunk, an' 'cause Cun'l Chahmb'lin tole 'im not to come dyah no more, he got mighty mad. An' dat evenin' I'se tellin' yo' 'bout, he wuz talkin', an' he mention' Miss Anne's name. I see Marse Chan tu'n he eye 'roun' on 'im an' keep it on he face, an' pres'n'y Mr. Ronny said he wuz gwine hev some fun dyah yit. He didn' mention her name dat time ; but he said dey wuz all on 'em a parecel of stuck-up 'risticrats, an' her pa wan' no gent'man anyway, and *she*—— I don' know what he wuz gwine say (he nuvver said it), fur ez he got dat far Marse Chan riz up an' hit 'im a crack, an' he fall like he hed been hit wid a fence-rail. He challenged Marse Chan to fight a duil, an' Marse Chan he excepted de challenge, an' dey wuz gwine fight ; but some on 'em tole 'im Marse Chan wan' gwine mek a present o' him to his fam'ly, an' he got somebody to bre'k up de duil ; 'twan' nuthin' dough, but he wuz 'fred to fight Marse Chan. An' purty soon he lef' de comp'ny.

“ Well, I got one o' de gent'mens to write Judy

a letter for me, an' I tole her all 'bout de fight, an' how Marse Chan knock Mr. Ronny over fur speakin' contemptuous o' Cun'l Chahmb'lin, an' I tole her how Marse Chan wuz a-dyin' fur love o' Miss Anne. An' Judy she gits Miss Anne to read de letter fur her. Den Miss Anne she tells her pa, an'—you mind, Judy tells me all dis arfterwards, an' she say when Cun'l Chahmb'lin hear 'bout it, he wuz settin' on de poach, an' he set still a good while, an' den he sey to hisse'f :

“ ‘ Well, he carn' he'p bein' a Whig. ’

“ An' den he gits up an' walks up to Miss Anne an' looks at her right hard ; an' Miss Anne she hed done tu'n away her head an' wuz makin' out she wuz fixin' a rose-bush 'g'inst de poach ; an' when her pa kep' lookin' at her, her face got jes' de color o' de roses on de bush, an' pres'n'y her pa sez :

“ ‘ Anne ! ’

“ An' she tu'ned 'roun', an' he sez :

“ ‘ Do yo' want 'im ? ’

“ An' she sez, ‘ Yes, ’ an' put her head on he shoulder an' begin to cry ; an' he sez :

“ ‘ Well, I won' stan' between yo' no longer. Write to 'im an' say so. ’

“ We didn' know nuthin' 'bout dis den. We wuz a-fightin' an' a-fightin' all dat time ; an' come one day a letter to Marse Chan, an' I see 'im start to read it in his tent, an' he face hit look so cu'ious, an' he han's trembled so I couldn' mek out what wuz de matter wid 'im. An' he fold' de letter up

an' wen' out an' wen' 'way down 'hine de camp, an' stayed dyah 'bout nigh an hour. Well, seh, I wuz on de lookout for 'im when he come back, an', fo' Gord, ef he face didn' shine like a angel's. I say to myse'f, 'Um'm! ef de glory o' Gord ain' done shine on 'im!' An' what yo' 'spose 'twuz?

"He tuk me wid 'im dat evenin', an' he tell me he hed done git a letter from Miss Anne, an' Marse Chan he eyes look like gre't big stars, an' he face wuz jes' like 'twuz dat mawnin' when de sun riz up over de low groun's, an' I see 'im stan'in' dyah wid de pistil in he han', lookin' at it, an' not knowin' but what it mout be de lars' time, an' he done mek up he mine not to shoot ole Cun'l Chahmb'lin fur Miss Anne's sake, what writ 'im de letter.

"He fold' de letter wha' was in his han' up, an' put it in he inside pocket—right dyar on de lef' side; an' den he tole me he tho't mebbe we wuz gwine hev some warm wuk in de nex' two or th'ee days, an' arfter dat ef Gord speared 'im he'd git a leave o' absence fur a few days, an' we'd go home.

"Well, dat night de orders come, an' we all hed to git over to'ds Romney; an' we rid all night till 'bout light; an' we halted right on a little creek, an' we stayed dyah till mos' breakfas' time, an' I see Marse Chan set down on de groun' 'hine a bush an' read dat letter over an' over. I watch 'im, an' de battle wuz a-goin' on, but we hed orders to stay 'hine de hill, an' ev'y now an' den de bullets

would cut de limbs o' de trees right over us, an' one o' dem big shells what goes '*Awhar—awhar—awhar!*' would fall right 'mong us; but Marse Chan he didn' mine it no mo'n nuthin'! Den it 'peared to git closer an' thicker, an' Marse Chan he calls me, an' I crep' up, an' he sez:

“ ‘Sam, we'se goin' to win in dis battle, an' den we'll go home an' git married; an' I'se goin' home wid a star on my collar.' An' den he sez, 'Ef I'm wounded, kyar me home, yo' hear?' An' I sez, 'Yes, Marse Chan.'

“ Well, jes' den dey blowed boots an' saddles an' we mounted; an' de orders come to ride 'roun' de slope, an' Marse Chan's company wuz de secon'; an' when we got 'roun' dyah, we wuz right in it. Hit wuz de wust place ever dis nigger got in. An' dey said, 'Charge 'em!' an' my king! ef ever you see bullets fly, dey did dat day. Hit wuz jes' like hail; an' we wen' down de slope (I long wid de res') an' up de hill right to'ds de cannons, an' de fire wuz so strong dyar (dey hed a whole rigiment o' infintrys layin' down dyar onder de cannons) our lines sort o' broke an' stop; de cun'l was kilt, an' I b'lieve dey wuz jes' 'bout to bre'k all to pieces, when Marse Chan rid up an' cotch hol' de fleg an' hollers, 'Foller me!' an' rid strainin' up de hill 'mong de cannons. I seen 'im when he went, de sorrel four good lengths ahead o' ev'y udder hoss, jes' like he use' to be in a fox-hunt, an' de whole rigiment right arfter 'im. Yo' ain' nuvver hear thunder! Fust thing I knowed, de roan roll' head

over heels an' flung me up 'g'inst de bank, like yo' chuck a nubbin over 'g'inst de foot o' de corn pile. An' dat's what kep' me from bein' kilt, I 'specks. Judy she say she think 'twuz Providence, but I think 'twuz de bank. Of co'se, Providence put de bank dyar, but how come Providence nuvver saved Marse Chan! When I look' 'roun', de roan wuz layin' dyah by me, stone dead, wid a cannon-ball gone 'mos' th'oo him, an' our men hed done swep' dem on t'udder side from de top o' de hill. 'Twan' mo'n a minit, de sorrel come gallupin' back wid his mane flyin', an' de rein hangin' down on one side to his knee. 'Dyar!' says I, 'fo' Gord! I 'specks dey done kill Marse Chan, an' I promised to tek care on him.'

"I jumped up an' run over de bank, an' dyar wid a whole lot o' dead men, an' some not dead yit, onder one o' de guns wid de fleg still in he han', an' a bullet right th'oo he body, lay Marse Chan. I tu'n' 'im over an' call 'im 'Marse Chan!' but 'twan' no use, he wuz done gone home, sho' 'nuff. I pick' 'im up in my arms wid de fleg still in he han's, an' toted 'im back jes' like I did dat day when he wuz a baby, an' ole marster gin 'im to me in my arms, an' sez he could trus' me, an' tell me to tek keer on 'im long ez he lived. I kyar'd 'im 'way off de battlefiel' out de way o' de balls, an' I laid 'im down onder a big tree till I could git somebody to ketch de sorrel for me. He wuz cotched arfter awhile, an' I hed some money, so I got some pine plank an' made a coffin dat even-

in', an' wrapt Marse Chan's body up in de fleg, an' put 'im in de coffin ; but I didn' nail de top on strong, 'cause I knowed ole missis wan' see 'im ; an' I got a' ambulance an' set out for home dat night. We reached dyar de nex' evenin', arfter travellin' all dat night an' all nex' day.

" Hit 'peared like somethin' hed tole ole missis we wuz comin' so ; for when we got home she wuz waitin' for us—done drest up in her best Sunday-clo'es, an' stan'in' at de head o' de big steps, an' ole marster settin' in his big cheer—ez we druv up de hill to'ds de house, I drivin' de ambulance an' de sorrel leadin' 'long behine wid de stirrups crost over de saddle.

" She come down to de gate to meet us. We took de coffin out de ambulance an' kyar'd it right into de big parlor wid de pictures in it, whar dey use' to dance in ole times when Marse Chan wuz a school-boy, an' Miss Anne Chahmb'lin use' to come over, an' go wid ole missis into her chamber an' tek her things off. In dyar we laid de coffin on two o' de cheers, an' ole missis nuvver said a wud ; she jes' looked so ole an' white.

" When I had tell 'em all 'bout it, I tu'ned right 'roun' an' rid over to Cun'l Chahmb'lin's, 'cause I knowed dat wuz what Marse Chan he'd 'a' wanted me to do. I didn' tell nobody whar I wuz gwine, 'cause yo' know none on 'em hadn' nuvver speak to Miss Anne, not sence de duil, an' dey didn' know 'bout de letter.

" When I rid up in de yard, dyar wuz Miss Anne

a-stan'in' on de poach watchin' me ez I rid up. I tied my hoss to de fence, an' walked up de parf. She knowed by de way I walked dyar wuz somethin' de motter, an' she wuz mighty pale. I drapt my cap down on de een' o' de steps an' went up. She nuvver opened her mouf ; jes' stan' right still an' keep her eyes on my face. Fust, I couldn' speak ; den I cotch my voice, an' I say, 'Marse Chan, he done got he furlough.'

"Her face was mighty ashy, an' she sort o' shook, but she didn' fall. She tu'ned roun' an' said, 'Git me de ker'ige !' Dat wuz all.

"When de ker'ige come 'roun', she hed put on her bonnet, an' wuz ready. Ez she got in, she sey to me, 'Hev yo' brought him home?' an' we drove 'long, I ridin' behine.

"When we got home, she got out, an' walked up de big walk—up to de poach by herse'f. Ole missis hed done fin' de letter in Marse Chan's pocket, wid de love in it, while I wuz 'way, an' she wuz a-waitin' on de poach. Dey sey dat wuz de fust time ole missis cry when she find de letter, an' dat she sut'n'y did cry over it, pintedly.

"Well, seh, Miss Anne she walks right up de steps, mos' up to ole missis stan'in' dyar on de poach, an' jes' falls right down mos' to her, on her knees fust, an' den flat on her face right on de flo', ketchin' at ole missis' dress wid her two han's—so.

"Ole missis stood for 'bout a minit lookin' down at her, an' den she drapt down on de flo' by her, an' took her in bofe her arms.

“ I couldn’ see, I wuz cryin’ so myse’f, an’ ev’y-body wuz cryin’. But dey went in arfter a while in de parlor, an’ shet de do’; an’ I hyard ’em say, Miss Anne she tuk de coffin in her arms an’ kissed it, an’ kissed Marse Chan, an’ call ’im by his name, an’ her darlin’, an’ ole missis lef’ her cryin’ in dyar tell some on ’em went in, an’ found her done faint on de flo’.

“ Judy (she’s my wife) she tell me she heah Miss Anne when she axed ole missis mout she wear mo’nin’ fur ’im. I don’ know how dat is; but when we buried ’im nex’ day, she wuz de one whar walked arfter de coffin, holdin’ ole marster, an’ ole missis she walked next to ’em.”

“ Well, we buried Marse Chan dyar in de ole grabeyard, wid de fleg wrapped roun’ ’im, an’ he face lookin’ like it did dat mawnin’ down in de low groun’s, wid de new sun shinin’ on it so peaceful.

“ Miss Anne she nuvver went home arfter dat; she stay wid ole marster an’ ole missis ez long ez dey lived. Dat warn’ so mighty long, ’cause ole marster he died dat fall, when dey wuz fallerin’ fur wheat—I had jes’ married Judy den—an’ ole missis she warn’ long behine him. We buried her by him next summer. Miss Anne she went in de hospitals toreckly arfter ole missis died; an’ jes’ fo’ Richmond fell she come home sick wid de fever. Yo’ nuvver would ’a’ knowed her fur de same ole Miss Anne. She wuz light ez a piece o’ peth, an’ so white, ’cep’ her eyes an’ her sorrel

hyar, an' she kep' on gittin' whiter an' weaker. Judy she sut'n'y did nuss her faithful. But she nuvver got no betterment! De fever an' Marse Chan's bein' kilt hed done strain her, an' she died jes' 'fo' de folks wuz sot free.

"So we buried Miss Anne right by Marse Chan, in a place whar ole missis hed tole us to leave, an' dey's bofe on 'em sleep side by side over in de ole grabeyard at home.

"An' will yo' please tell me, marster? Dey tells me dat de Bible sey dyar won' be marryin' nor givin' in marriage in heaven, but I don' b'lieve it signifies dat—does yo'?"

I gave him the comfort of my earnest belief in some other interpretation, together with several spare "eighteen-pences," as he called them, for which he seemed humbly grateful. And as I rode away I heard him calling across the fence to his wife, who was standing in the door of a small whitewashed cabin, near which we had been standing for some time:

"Judy, have Marse Chan's dawg got home?"

MR. BIXBY'S CHRISTMAS VISITOR.

BY CHARLES S. GAGE.

AT the head of the first flight of stairs, and on opposite sides of the landing, were the respective rooms of Mr. Bixby and Mr. Bangs. The house in which they lived stood in a quiet and retired street on the lower and western side of New York, a locality which was once inhabited by fashionable families, afterward by old-fashioned families, and at the time of our story by the keepers of boarding-houses for single men.

Mr. Henry Bixby and Mr. Alfred Bangs were single men—Mr. Bangs, the wine-merchant, because he liked wine and song so well that he never had leisure to think of women, because he was fat, because he was red in the face, and, if more reasons are necessary, because his fingers were chubby and short. For twenty years, day by day, Mr. Bangs had been absorbed in business.

For twenty years, night after night, it had been his custom to entertain his friends at his apartment in not a very quiet way. He was so happy, and bulbous, and jolly, that he had never thought of marriage. Yet he might easily have been mistaken by the casual observer for a family man. He wore a white vest when it wasn't too cold ; his linen was painfully plain. There was not a sign of jewelry about him. He wore low shoes, which he tied with a ribbon. This was Mr. Bangs.

Not quite so old in years as the opposite lodger was Mr. Bixby, known to his few friends as a genial philosopher and poet, to the public as the literary critic of one of the great daily papers. He might have been thirty-five years of age, but, as he had lived more for others than for himself, as he had made a study and not a pleasure of life, his gray eyes and the other features of his face suggested to whoever met him a longer past. There was something about him that caused men to wonder, not what he was, but what he had been.

For ten years Mr. Bangs and Mr. Bixby had been inmates of the house together. Mr. Bangs had been there longer. The present landlady had received as a legacy from her predecessor, who did not care to take him away, Mr. Bangs. As she said, she made a present of Bangs.

Long as they had known each other, the two lodgers were only acquaintances. Sometimes, on a Sunday afternoon, they would walk out in company, stroll down to the Battery, and there smoke

their cigars and watch the ships, but beyond this point of sociability, which neither enjoyed, there was nothing more. Never had Bixby read Bangs any poem he had made, nor did ever Bangs invite Bixby to meet his convivial friends of an evening to play whist or to partake of his mulled ale. In fact, Mr. Bixby had been often and with great enthusiasm voted an unsocial fellow by the cronies of Mr. Bangs, but he rose somewhat in their estimation when they were informed that he had consented to exchange rooms with their host.

"He isn't such a grouty fellow, after all," said Bangs. "I told him that we were too near the street, and that some one had been complaining to the landlady of our singing. He didn't even stop to think, but agreed to do it at once. He thought the light would be better here. Now, fellows, I call that doing the fair thing."

And the speech of Mr. Bangs was applauded.

It was the morning of the day before Christmas that the change was effected. In the closet where had been the bottles, the decanters, glasses, and pickle-jars of the late occupant, Mr. Bixby had arranged shelves, and filled them with his books. Over the mantel, from which Mr. Bangs had taken away a colored print of a bull-dog in an overcoat, Mr. Bixby hung a fine engraving of the Madonna, and on the mantel itself he had placed his clock. It was a small French clock under a crystal, so that its rapidly-swinging pendulum could be easily seen. All bachelors, however negligent of their

surroundings, have some one hobby among articles of furniture. It may be an easy-chair, or a book-case, or a chandelier—there is one thing that must be the best of its kind. There could be no doubt, from the care with which Mr. Bixby placed his clock in its position, and from time to time compared it with his watch, that this was his hobby. It had the three requisites which he demanded in a clock. It kept correct time without failing, its pendulum swung rapidly, and was plainly visible. Time past was the happiness of Mr. Bixby, and this clock told him continually that all was being done that could be done to induce the hours of every day to go over to the majority. He depended upon this clock. He was surer of its mechanism than of that of his own heart.

What with hanging his pictures and arranging his furniture, and with many other little things which had to be done, Mr. Bixby was busily employed all day. But the task was not an unpleasant one. His heart was in the work, for there was hardly an object in the room not nearly associated with some event in his past life. After carefully brushing the dust from an old writing-desk, which had evidently once belonged to a lady, he placed it upon the rug in front of the fire. Only on Christmas-eves was this desk opened.

“It is curious,” thought Mr. Bixby, “that I should have moved this day, of all days in the year !”

Often in his work he thought of stopping to take

from the desk an old packet of letters, and reading them once more. But it was not yet time, and, moreover, he was continually interrupted. First, there came some one to his door with "Two dozen Congress-water for Mr. Bangs;" then one with "Mr. Bangs's boots," and another to tell Mr. Bangs that "the pup was big enough to take away." Finally, came Bangs himself, to complain of like interruptions, and to bid him good-by.

"Here is some manuscript a boy left for you. You will have to attend both doors now. I am off to spend Christmas. We are going to have a Tom-and-Jerry party in Jersey. You know—

"The Tom-and-Jerry days have come, the happiest in the year!"

Good rendering, eh? That isn't all:

"I only wish to live till the juleps come again!"

And Mr. Bangs laughed uproariously, even after he had said, "Good-by," and shut the door behind him.

"What a personification of Bacchus!" thought Mr. Bixby—

"Ever laughing, ever young."

He will be young as long as he lives, but I am afraid that won't be long. If ever there was a man in immediate danger of apoplexy, Bangs is that man."

It was after dinner when Mr. Bixby lighted his drop-light and sat down before the fire. He

pushed an ottoman in front of him, on which to rest his feet, which he had comfortably encased in his slippers. But the shadows in his new room did not please him. He could hardly see the clock on the mantel. The Madonna above was completely in the shade. So he lighted the chandelier above and sat down again, hoping that no friend, either of his own or of Mr. Bangs, would interrupt him. The desk was open at his feet. The package of letters lay near him on the table. He placed his hand upon them, but let it rest there. The hour had not quite arrived when he would read them. He fell again into the reveries of the day. He lingered over the thoughts of his better life ere he opened the packet which told of its end. For the last ten years he had labored without ambition, and had been successful. His name was well known as a journalist, and his salary was ample. Before that time he had striven ambitiously, but fruitlessly, patiently, but as in a quicksand, until, on a day, he had none to strive for but himself, and then success had come. Since noon, seven hours and twenty-nine minutes, said the clock before him. His anniversary was near. Mr. Bixby drew the letters near him, and untied the package. Just then there came a knock at his door, and, before he had determined whether or not he should say, "Come in," the door opened, and an elderly gentleman stepped into the apartment. Quietly he came in. There was no sound attending his entrance except the knock. Mr.

Bixby, looking up, saw a man of more than ordinary height, with countenance rigid and puritanical in expression, as though the mind which had formed it was one influenced more by justice than mercy. His eyes were concealed by a pair of colored spectacles, but these, as they caught and reflected the light, were brighter and more startling than any eyes could have been. He was dressed in a long surtout, which he wore closely buttoned, high dickey, and high black-silk stock, which covered his throat to his chin. His iron-gray hair was brushed somewhat pompously backward over his forehead, and his whole effect was that of a gentleman of the generation which wore bell-crowned hats and carried enormous canes with tassels. But what attracted Mr. Bixby's particular attention were the wrinkles of his face. These were in all places where wrinkles should not be. One ran straight through the centre of his forehead, continuing the line of the nose upward to the hair. Two others, starting from the bridge of the nose, ran diagonally down to the nostrils. He was close-shaven, and his lips were straight and thin. These peculiarities of his visitor Mr. Bixby had barely time to mark when the gentleman said :

“ Ah, Mr. Bangs, I am glad to find you in ! ”

Mr. Bixby never in his life more desired to be alone, and yet there was something in this old man which so attracted him that he could not correct his mistake. He felt a sudden fascination and

desire to know more of him. Bangs was away and could not be seen. The gentleman could not be very well acquainted with Bangs, very probably never had seen him, or he would not have made such an error. But nothing but the influence which seemed to proceed from his visitor could have induced Mr. Bixby to answer as he did.

"Thank you, sir. Pray, take this chair."

As he said this, he arose and wheeled an easy-chair to the other side of the table.

The elderly gentleman sat down.

"You have a very cheerful apartment here, Mr. Bangs."

"Yes. I always like to be comfortable."

"Of course," said the elderly gentleman.

"Will you remove your overcoat, sir?" asked Mr. Bixby, and immediately repented it.

"Oh, no, I shall stop but a moment."

There was an interval of silence. A block of coal broke open in the grate and fell apart. A jet of gas burst forth and burned, then sputtered and went out. Mr. Bixby wondered on what business he had come, and why he did not open the subject at once, if he was only intending to stop a moment.

"It is very disagreeable weather out," said the man with the pompous forelock, interrupting his reflections.

"Snowing?" asked Bixby.

"No—sleet."

"Very unpleasant to have far to go such a

night," suggested Bixby, who could think of nothing better to say.

"Not at all," responded the old gentleman, authoritatively.

Bixby was silent again.

The old gentleman, leaning with his elbow on the table, began again.

"You like to live well, Mr. Bangs?"

"I try to," answered Mr. Bixby.

"Yes."

"This must be some relative of Bangs come to deliver him a lecture on his course of life. Why don't he broach his advice at once?" thought Mr. Bixby. The visitor here pulled a glove from his right hand, ran his fingers through his hair, and then, in a more business-like tone, spoke again :

"Although a stranger to you personally, Mr. Bangs, I have always taken a great interest in your family. Mr. Bangs, I knew your father."

"Indeed ! I never heard him speak—"

"No, I dare say ; it was near the end of his life. I was near by, and rendered him some assistance, when he died suddenly of apoplexy. He was not so much of a man as your grandfather."

"Was he not?" asked Mr. Bixby, musingly. He was thinking how old the grandfather of his friend Bangs must have been.

"No," continued the elderly gentleman ; "but even his judgment I never considered equal to that of your great-grandfather."

"Here is, indeed, a friend—a friend of the

family. Why is Mr. Bangs away?" thought Mr. Bixby, and he bent his head a little, and looked under the drop-light, to get a view of his visitor. He saw only the reflection on his spectacles, and drew back suddenly, for fear of being detected.

"You like a good song, I have heard, Mr. Bangs," came from the other side of the table. "Have you any favorite?"

Mr. Bixby did not understand this at all. The question puzzled him. Should he as Bangs fall in the estimation of some relative if he admitted the fact? Or did his visitor intend to sing? However, he felt compelled to be frank, so he said:

"Oh, yes; I like a good song. Some of the Scotch ballads please me most. There is 'The Land o' the Leal.'"

"A very fine song, sir. A very fine song. It is a credit to any man to like that song."

The old gentleman was excited. Mr. Bixby was just congratulating himself on having given Bangs a lift, when his thoughts were turned into an altogether new channel by the following remark:

"It was my impression, however, that your taste ran rather in the way of drinking-songs. I should have thought now you would have said, 'The Coal-Black Wine.'"

There was something in the tone with which this was uttered that made Mr. Bixby shudder. It ran through his mind that this man was some enemy of Bangs—that he was dangerous. Startled by this sudden suspicion, tremblingly he again peered

under the shade. The wrinkle in the line of the frontal suture was more deeply indented. The light on the spectacles was brighter than ever.

"Mr. Bangs, I called on your opposite neighbor, Mr. Bixby, to-night. I knocked on the door, but he was away."

"Yes," said Mr. Bixby, somewhat confused. He wished that Bangs had stayed at home, and determined to end the interview as soon as possible.

"Yes. I am sorry. I had a positive appointment with him. I am a great friend of his."

"Does he know you?"

"Oh, no; we have never met personally that he remembers. I am an old friend of the family. He suffers from the heart-disease, and has been expecting me."

"Oh, you are a physician?"

"Yes, sir. I attended his father at his last illness."

Mr. Bixby's heart began to beat rapidly. His mind became equally active, and, although he had no experience to be guided by, he began to suspect the nature of this man's business with Bangs. He almost determined to discover himself, but the letters were yet unread. If that were only done, he would do anything his visitor might request. Recalling the old gentleman's last words, he said, at last, calmly:

"And his mother?"

"Yes, and his mother."

The old man's voice assumed almost a kindly tone.

"He is, indeed, a friend of my family," thought Mr. Bixby; and then he started, for fear he might have spoken aloud.

His eyes fell upon the packet of letters. He must read them. He must end the interview. The old doctor must have noticed Mr. Bixby's eyes, with the tears rising in them, as he tenderly touched the letters one by one, for it was with a voice very gentle and low that he spoke again.

"I attended once a very dear friend of his. It must be quite ten years ago now. Her name was Margaret. I think she loved him, for I remember—yes—it was one Christmas-eve, she said, and after that she said no more, 'Has Harry come?'"

Mr. Bixby could bear no more. His sobs were striving for utterance. His fingers grasped the strong oak arms of his chair. It was only the thought of the letters which gave him strength to say:

"I am sorry, sir. You mistake me. I must ask you to leave me. You may come again. I shall be here, but I have something I would do to-night. I have given you much of my time. It is already late."

"It is you who mistake, Mr. Bangs. But I am going now. I said I would stop but a moment. I have kept my promise, as you will see by your clock."

Before his hands fell listless from the arms of

the chair—before his lips parted, but not for speech—ay, just before that quick, strong pain in his heart, Mr. Bixby saw on the white dial the black hands yet pointing to the seven hours and the twenty-nine minutes, the pendulum moveless, still, half-way on the upward journey of the arc.

The elderly gentleman arose, walked round the table, and smiled, himself, as he saw a smile of perfected happiness on the face of the dead, when so lately sorrow itself had been pictured on the face of the living.

“It was hard to deceive him, but he will thank me now,” said he of the gray locks and wrinkled visage. “And here are the letters which he does not need.”

Had the old man no more appointments to keep? For he took up one of the letters and opened it. A lock of golden hair fell unnoticed to the floor. Then he read silently, and, after a while, aloud :

“I hope you will come and see me on Christmas-eve, for I am not well. I long for you more than I can say. You must be tired with your struggle in the great city, and need rest. O Harry ! come and comfort her that loves you, as you well know.

“MARGARET.”

The bells of Trinity commenced ringing.

“He was tired, and he needed rest,” said Death.

ELI.

BY C. H. WHITE.

I.

UNDER a boat, high and dry, at low tide, on the beach, John Wood was seated in the sand, sheltered from the sun in the boat's shadow, absorbed in the laying on of verdigris. The dull, worn color was rapidly giving place to a brilliant, shining green. Occasionally a scraper, which lay by, was taken up to remove the last trace of a barnacle.

It was Wood's boat, but he was not a boatman ; he painted cleverly, but he was not a painter. He kept the brown store under the elms of the main street, now hot and still, where at this moment his blushing sister was captivating the heart of an awkward farmer's boy, as she sold him a pair of striped suspenders.

As the church-clock struck the last of twelve decided blows, three children came rushing out of the house on the bank above the beach. It was one of those deceptive New England cottages, weather-worn without, but bright and bountifully home-like within—with its trim parlor, proud of a cabinet organ ; with its front hall, now cooled by the light sea-breeze drifting through the blind-door, where a tall clock issued its monotonous call to a siesta on the rattan lounge ; with its spare room, open now, opposite the parlor, and now, too, drawing in the salt air through close-shut blinds, in anticipation of the joyful arrival this evening of Sister Sarah, with her little brood, from the city.

The children scampered across the road, and then the eldest hushed the others and sent a little brother ahead to steal, barefoot, along the shining sea-weed to his father.

The plotted surprise appeared to succeed completely. The painter was seized by the ears from behind, and captured.

“ Guess who’s here, or you can’t get up,” said the infant captor.

“ It’s Napoleon Bonaparte ; don’t joggle,” said his father, running a brush steadily along the water-line.

“ No ! no ! no ! ” with shouts of laughter from the whole attacking party.

“ Then it’s Captain Ezekiel ? ”

This excited great merriment : Captain Ezekiel

was an aged, purblind man, who leaned on a cane.

After attempts to identify the invader — with the tax-collector come for taxes, then with the elderly minister making a pastoral call, with the formal schoolmaster, and with Samuel J. Tilden — the victim reached over his shoulder, and, seizing the assailant by a handful of calico jacket, brought him around, squirming, before him.

“Now,” he said, “I’ll give you a coat of ver-digris.”

(Great applause from the reserve force behind.)

“I suppose Mother sent you to say dinner’s ready,” said the father, rising and surveying the green bottom of the boat. “I must eat quick, so as to do the other side before half-flood.”

And with a child on each shoulder, and the third pushing him from behind with her head, he marched toward the vine-covered kitchen, where, between two opposite netted doors, the table was trimly set.

“Father, you look like a mermaid, with your green hands,” said his wife, laughing, as she handed him the spirits of turpentine. “A woman could paint that boat, in a light dress, and not get a spot on her.”

He smiled good-naturedly: he never spoke much.

“I guess Louise won’t have much trade to-day,” said his wife, as they all sat down; “it’s so hot in the sun that everybody’ll wait till night. But

she has her tatting-work to do, and she's got a book, too, that she wanted to finish."

Her husband nodded, and ate away.

"Oh, can't we go up street and see her, this afternoon?" said one of the children.

"Who can that be?" said the mother, as an elderly, half-official-looking man stopped his horse at the front gate and alighted. The man left the horse unchecked to browse by the road-side, and came to the door.

"Oh, it's you, Captain Nourse," said Wood, rising to open the netting door, and holding out his hand. "Come to summons me as a witness in something about the bank case, I suppose. Let me introduce Captain Nourse, Mary," he said, "deputy sheriff. Sit down, Captain, and have some dinner with us."

"No, I guess I won't set," said the captain. "I cal'lated not to eat till I got home, in the middle o' the a'ternoon. No, I'll set down in eye-shot of the mare, and read the paper while you eat."

"I hope they don't want me to testify anywhere to-day," said Wood; "because my boat's half verdigris'd, and I want to finish her this afternoon."

"No testimony to-day," said the captain. "Hi! hi! Kitty!" he called to the mare, as she began to meander across the road; and he went out to a tree by the front fence, and sat down on a green bench, beside a work-basket and a half-finished child's dress, and read the country paper which he had taken from the office as he came along.

After dinner Wood went out bareheaded, and leaned on the fence by the captain. His wife stood just inside the door, looking out at them.

The "bank case" was the great sensation of the town, and Wood was one of the main witnesses, for he had been taking the place of the absent cashier when the safe was broken open and rifled, to the widespread distress of depositors and stockholders and the ruin of Hon. Edward Clark, the president. Wood had locked the safe on the afternoon before the eventful night, and had carried home the key with him, and he was to testify to the contents of the safe as he had left it.

"I guess they're glad they've got such a witness as John," said his wife to herself, as she looked at him fondly, "and I guess they think there won't be much doubt about what he says."

"Well, Captain," said Wood, jocosely, breaking a spear of grass to bits in his fingers, "I didn't know but you'd come to arrest me."

The captain calmly smiled as only a man can smile who has been accosted with the same humorous remark a dozen times a day for twenty years. He folded his paper carefully, put it in his pocket, took off his spectacles and put them in their silver case, took a red silk handkerchief from his hat, wiped his face, and put the handkerchief back. Then he said, shortly:

"That's what I *have* come for."

Wood, still leaning on the fence, looked at him, and said nothing.

"That's just what I've come for," said Captain

Nourse. "I've got to arrest you ; here's the warrant." And he handed it to him.

"What does this mean?" said Wood. "I can't make head nor tail of this."

"Well," said the captain, "the long and short is : these high-toned detectives that they've had down from town, seein' as our own force wasn't good enough, allow that the safe was unlocked with a key, in due form, and then the lock was broke afterward, to look as if it had been forced open. They've had the foreman of the safe-men down, too, and he says the same thing. Naturally, the argument is : there were only two keys in existence ; one was safe with the president of the bank, and is about all he's got to show out of forty years' savings ; the only other one you had : consequently it heaves it on to you."

"I see," said Wood. "I will go with you. Do you want to come into the house with me while I get my coat?"

"Well, I suppose I must keep you in sight—now; you know."

And they went into the house.

"Mary," said her husband, "the folks that lost by Clark when the bank broke have been at him until he's felt obliged to pitch on somebody, and he's pitched on me ; and Captain Nourse has come to arrest me. I shall get bail before long."

She said nothing, and did not shed a tear till he was gone.

But then——

II.

WIDE wastes of salt marsh to the right, imprisoning the upland with a vain promise of infinite liberty, and, between low, distant sand-hills, a rim of sea. Stretches of pine woods behind, shutting in from the great outer world, and soon to darken into evening gloom. Ploughed fields and elm-dotted pastures to the left, and birch-lined roads leading by white farm-houses to the village, all speaking of cheer and freedom to the prosperous and the happy, but to the unfortunate and the indebted, of meshes invisible but strong as steel. But, before, no lonesome marshes, no desolate forest, no farm or village street, but the free blue ocean, rolling and tumbling still from the force of an expended gale.

In the open door-way of a little cottage, warmed by the soft slanting rays of the September sun, a rough man, burnt and freckled, was sitting, at his feet a net, engaged upon some handiwork which two little girls were watching. Close by him lay a setter, his nose between his paws. Occasionally the man raised his eyes to scan the sea.

"There's Joel," he said, "comin' in around the Bar. Not much air stirrin' now!"

Then he turned to his work again.

"First, you go *sø fash'*," he said to the children, as he drew a thread; "then you go *sø fash'.*"

And as he worked he made a great show of labor, much to their diversion.

But the sight of Joel's broad white sail had not brought pleasant thoughts to his mind. For Joel had hailed him, off the Shoal, the afternoon before, and had obligingly offered to buy his fish, right there, and so let him go directly home, omitting to mention that sudden jump of price due to an empty market.

"Wonder what poor man he's took a dollar out of to-day! Well, I s'pose it's all right: those that's got money, want money."

"What be you, Eli—ganging on hooks?" said Aunt Patience, as she tip-toed into the kitchen behind him, from his wife's sick-room, and softly closed the door after her.

"No," said the elder of the children; "he's mending our stockings, and showing me how."

"Well, you do have a hard time, don't you?" said Aunt Patience, looking down over his shoulder; "to slave and tug and scrape to get a house over your head, and then to have to turn square 'round, and stay to home with a sick woman, and eat all into it with mortgages!"

"Oh, well," he said, "we'll fetch, somehow."

Aunt Patience went to the glass, and holding a black pin in her mouth, carefully tied the strings of her sun-bonnet.

"Anyway," she says, "you take it good-natured. Though if there is one thing that's harder than another, it is to be good-natured all

the time, without being aggravating. I have known men that was so awfully good-natured that they was harder to live with than if they was cross !''

And without specifying further, she opened her plaid parasol, and stepped out at the porch.

THOUGH, on this quiet afternoon of Saturday, the peace of the approaching Sabbath seemed already brooding over the little dwelling, peace had not lent her hand to the building of the home. Every foot of land, every shingle, every nail, had been wrung from the reluctant sea. Every voyage had contributed something. It was a great day when Eli was able to buy the land. Then, between two voyages, he dug a cellar and laid a foundation ; then he saved enough to build the main part of the cottage and to finish the front room, lending his own hand to the work. Then he used to get letters at every port, telling of progress—how Lizzie, his wife, had adorned the front room with a bright nine-penny paper, of which a little piece was inclosed, which he kept as a sort of charm about him and exhibited to his friends ; how she and her little brother had lathed the entry and the kitchen, and how they had set out blackberry vines from the woods. Then another letter told of a surprise awaiting him on his return ; and, in due time, coming home as third mate from Hong Kong to a seaman's tumultuous welcome, he had found that a great, good-natured mason, with whose sick

child his wife had watched, night after night, had appeared one day with lime and hair and sand, and in white raiment, and had plastered the entry and the kitchen, and finished a room upstairs.

And so, for years, at home and on the sea, at New York, and at Valparaiso, and in the Straits of Malacca, the little house and the little family within it had grown into the fibre of Eli's heart. Nothing had given him more delight than to meet, in the strange streets of Calcutta or before the Mosque of Omar, some practical Yankee from Stonington or Machias, and, whittling, to discuss with him, among the turbans of the Orient, the comparative value of shaved and of sawed shingles, or the economy of "Swedes-iron" nails, and to go over with him the estimates and plans which he had worked out in his head under all the constellations of the skies.

THE supper things were cleared away. The children had said good-night and gone to bed, and Eli had been sitting for an hour by his wife's bedside. He had had to tax his patience and ingenuity heavily during the long months that she had lain there to entertain her for a little while in the evening, after his hard, wet day's work. He had been talking now of the coming week, when he was to serve upon the jury in the adjoining county-town.

"I cal'late I can come home about every night," he said, "and it'll be quite a change, at any rate."

"But you don't seem so cheerful about it as I

counted you would be," said his wife. "Are you afraid you'll have to be on the bank-case?"

"Not much!" he answered. "No trouble 'n that case! Jury won't leave their seats. These city fellers'll find they've bit off more'n they can chew when they try to figure out John Wood done that. I only hope I'll have the luck to be on that case—all hands on the jury whisper together a minute, and then clear him, right on the spot, and then shake hands with him all 'round!"

"But something is worrying you," she said. "What is it? You have looked it since noon."

"Oh, nothin'," he replied — "only George Cahoon came up to-noon to say that he was goin' West next week, and that he would have to have that money he let me have a while ago. And where to get it—I don't know."

III.

THE court-room was packed. John Wood's trial was drawing to its close. Eli was on the jury. Some one had advised the prosecuting attorney, in a whisper, to challenge him, but he had shaken his head and said :

"Oh, I couldn't afford to challenge him for that ; it would only leak out, and set the jury against me. I'll risk his standing out against this evidence."

The trial had been short. It had been shown how

the little building of the bank had been entered. Skilled locksmiths from the city had testified that the safe was opened with a key, and that the lock was broken afterward, from the inside—plainly to raise the theory of a forcible entry by strangers.

It had been proved that the only key in existence, not counting that kept by the president, was in the possession of Wood, who was filling, for a few days, the place of the cashier—the president's brother—in his absence. It had been shown that Wood was met, at one o'clock of the night in question, crossing the fields toward his home, from the direction of the bank, with a large wicker basket slung over his shoulders, returning, as he had said, from eel-spearing in Harlow's Creek ; and there was other circumstantial evidence.

Mr. Clark, the president of the bank, had won the sympathy of every one by the modest way in which, with eye-glasses in hand, he had testified to the particulars of the loss which had left him penniless, and had ruined others whose little all was in his hands. And then, in reply to the formal question, he had testified, amid roars of laughter from the court-room, that it was not he who robbed the safe. At this, even the judge and Wood's lawyer had not restrained a smile.

This had left the guilt with Wood. His lawyer, an inexperienced young attorney—who had done more or less business for the bank, and would hardly have ventured to defend this case but that the president had kindly expressed his entire will-

ingness that he should do so—had, of course, not thought it worth while to cross-examine Mr. Clark, and had directed his whole argument against the theory that the safe had been opened with a key, and not by strangers. But he had felt all through that, as a man politely remarked to him when he finished, he was only butting his “head ag’in a stone wall.”

And while he was arguing, a jolly-looking old lawyer had written, in the fly-leaf of a law-book on his knee, and passed with a wink to a young man near him who had that very morning been admitted to the bar, these lines :

“When callow Blackstones soar too high,
Quit common-sense, and reckless fly,
Soon, Icarus-like, they headlong fall,
And down come client, case, and all.”

The district-attorney had not thought it worth while to expend much strength upon his closing argument ; but being a jovial stump-speaker, of a wide reputation within narrow limits, he had not been able to refrain from making merry over Wood’s statement that the basket which he had been seen bearing home, on the eventful-night, was a basket of eels.

“Fine eels those, gentlemen ! We have seen gold-fish and silver-fish, but golden eels are first discovered by this defendant. The apostle, in Holy Writ, caught a fish with a coin in its mouth ; but this man leaves the apostle in the dim distance

when he finds eels that are all money. No storied fisherman of Bagdad, catching enchanted princes disguised as fishes in the sea, ever hooked such a treasure as this defendant hooked when he hooked that basket of eels ! [Rustling appreciation of the pun among the jury.] If a squirming, twisting, winding, wriggling eel, gentleman, can be said at any given moment to have a back, we may distinguish this new-found species as the green-back eel. It is a common saying that no man can hold an eel and remain a Christian. I should like to have viewed the pious equanimity of this church-member when he laid his hands on that whole bed of eels. In happy, barefoot boyhood, gentlemen, we used to find mud-turtles marked with initials or devices cut in their shells ; but what must have been our friend's surprise to find, in the muddy bed of Harlow's Creek, eels marked with a steel-engraving of the landing of Columbus, and the signature of the Register of the Treasury ! I hear that a corporation is now being formed by the title of The Harlow's Creek Greenback National Bank-bill Eel-fishing Company, to follow up, with seines and spears, our worthy friend's discovery ! I learn that the news of this rich placer has spread to the golden mountains of the West, and that the exhausted intellects which have been reduced to such names for their mines as ' The Tombstone,' ' The Red Dog,' the ' Mrs. E. J. Parkhurst,' are likely now to flood us with prospectuses of the ' Eel Mine,' ' The Flat Eel,' ' The Double Eel,' and then,

when they get ready to burst upon confiding friends, 'The Consolidated Eels.' "

It takes but little to make a school or a court-room laugh, and the speech had appeared to give a good deal of amusement to the listeners.

To all ?

Did it amuse that man who sat, with folded arms, harsh and rigid, at the dock ? Did it divert that white-faced woman, cowering in a corner, listening as in a dream ?

THE judge now charged the jury briefly. It was unnecessary for him, he said, to recapitulate evidence of so simple a character. The chief question for the jury was as to the credibility of the witnesses. If the witnesses for the prosecution were truthful and were not mistaken, the inference of guilt seemed inevitable ; this the defendant's counsel had conceded. The defendant had proved a good reputation ; upon that point there was only this to be said : that, while such evidence was entitled to weight, yet, on the other hand, crimes involving a breach of trust could, from their very nature, be committed only by persons whose good reputations secured them positions of trust.

THE jury-room had evidently not been furnished by a ring. There was a long table for debate, twelve hard chairs for repose, twelve spittoons for luxury, and a clock.

The jury sat in silence for a few moments, as

old Captain Nourse, who had them in his keeping, and eyed them as if he was afraid that he might lose one of them in a crack and be held accountable on his bond, rattled away at the unruly lock. Looking at them then, you would have seen faces all of a New England cast but one. There was a tall, powerful negro called George Washington, a man well known in this county town, to which he had come, as driftwood from the storm of war, in '65. Some of the "boys" had heard him, in a great prayer-meeting in Washington—a city which he always spoke of as his "namesake"—at the time of the great review, say, in his strong voice, with that pathetic quaver in it: "Like as de parched an' weary traveller hangs his harp upon de winder, an' sighs for oysters in de desert, so I longs to res' my soul an' my foot in Mass'chusetts;" and they were so delighted with him that they invited him on the spot to go home with them, and took up a collection to pay his fare, and so he was a public character. As for his occupation—when the census-taker, with a wink to the boys in the store, had asked him what it was, he had said, in that same odd tone: "Putties up glass a little—white-washes a little—" and, when the man had made a show of writing all that down, "preaches a little." He might have said "preaches a big," for you could hear him half a mile away.

The foreman was a retired sea-captain. "Good cap'n—Cap'n Thomas," one of his neighbors had said of him. "Allers gits good ships—never hez

to go huntin' 'round for a vessel. But it is astonishin' what differences they is ! Now there's Cap'n A. K. P. Bassett, down to the West Harbor. You let it git 'round that Cap'n A. K. P. is goin' off on a Chiny voyage, and you'll see half a dozen old shays to onct, hitched all along his fence of an arternoon, and wimmen inside the house, to git Cap'n A. K. P. to take their boys. But you let Cap'n Thomas give out that he wants boys, and he hez to glean 'em—from the poor-house, and from step-mothers, and where he can : the wimmen knows ! Still," he added, " Cap'n Thomas 's a good cap'n. I've nothin' to say ag'in him. He's smart !"

" GENTLEMEN," said the foreman, when the officer, at last, had securely locked them in, " shall we go through the formality of a ballot ? If the case were a less serious one, we might have rendered a verdict in our seats."

" What's the use foolin' 'round ballotin' ?" said a thick-set butcher. " Ain't we all o' one mind ?"

" It is for you to say, gentlemen," said the foreman. " I shouldn't want to have it go abroad that we had not acted formally, if there was any one disposed to cavil."

" Mr. Speaker," said George Washington, rising and standing in the attitude of Webster, " I rises to appoint to order. We took ballast in de prior cases, and why make flesh of one man an' a fowl of another ?"

"Very well," said the foreman, a trifle sharply.
"The longest way round is the shortest way home.'"

Twelve slips of paper were handed out, to be indorsed guilty, "for form." They were collected in a hat and the foreman told them over—"just for form." "'Guilty,' 'guilty,' 'guilty,' 'guilty';—wait a minute," he said, "here is a mistake. Here is one 'not guilty'—whose is this?"

There was a pause.

"Whose is it?" said the foreman, sharply.

Eli turned a little red.

"It's mine," he said.

"Do you mean it?" said the foreman.

"Of course I mean it," he answered.

"Whew!" whistled the foreman. "Very well, sir; we'll have an understanding, then. This case is proved to the satisfaction of every man who heard it, I may safely say, but one. Will that one please state the grounds of his opinion?"

"I ain't no talker," said Eli, "but I ain't satisfied he's guilty—that's all."

"Don't you believe the witnesses?"

"Mostly."

"Which one don't you believe?"

"I can't say. I don't believe he's guilty."

"Is there one that you think lied?"

No answer.

"Now it seems to me——" said a third juryman.

"One thing at a time, gentlemen," said the foreman. "Let us wait for an answer from Mr.

Smith. Is there any one that you think lied? We will wait, gentlemen, for an answer."

There was a long pause. The trial seemed to Eli Smith to have shifted from the court to this shabby room, and he was now the culprit.

All waited for him; all eyes were fixed upon him.

The clock ticked loud! Eli counted the seconds. He knew the determination of the foreman.

The silence became intense.

"I want to say my say," said a short man in a pea-jacket—a retired San Francisco pilot, named Eldridge. "I entertain no doubt the man is guilty. At the same time, I allow for differences of opinion. I don't know this man that's voted 'not guilty,' but he seems to be a well-meaning man. I don't know his reasons; probably he don't understand the case. I should like to have the foreman tell the evidence over, so as if he don't see it clear, he can ask questions, and we can explain."

"I second de motion," said George Washington.

There was a general rustle of approval.

"I move it," said the pilot, encouraged.

"Very well, Mr. Eldridge," said the foreman.

"If there is no objection, I will state the evidence, and if there is any loop-hole, I will trouble Mr. Smith to suggest it as I go along," and he proceeded to give a summary of the testimony, with homely force.

"Now, sir?" he said, when he had finished.

"I move for another ballot," said Mr. Eldridge.

The result was the same. Eli had voted "not guilty."

"Mr. Smith," said the foreman, "this must be settled in some way. This is no child's play. You can't keep eleven men here, trifling with them, giving no pretence of a reason."

"I haven't any reasons, only that I don't believe he's guilty," said Eli. "I'm not goin' to vote a man into states-prison, when I don't believe he done it," and he rose and walked to the window, and looked out. It was low tide. There was a broad stretch of mud in the distance, covered with boats lying over disconsolate. A driving storm had emptied the streets. He beat upon the rain-dashed glass a moment with his fingers, and then he sat down again.

"Well, sir," said the foreman, "this is singular conduct. What do you propose to do?"

Silence.

"I suppose you realize that the rest of us are pretty rapidly forming a conclusion on this matter," said the foreman.

"Come ! come !" said Mr. Eldridge ; "don't be quite so hard on him, Captain. Now, Mr. Smith," he said, standing up with his hands in his coat-pockets, and looking at Eli, "we know that there often is crooked sticks on juries, that hold out alone—that's to be expected ; but they always argue, and stand to it the rest are fools, and all that. Now, all is, we don't see why you don't sort of argue, if you've got reasons satisfactory to

you. Come, now," he added, walking up to Eli, and resting one foot on the seat of his chair, " why don't you tell it over? and if we're wrong, I'm ready to join you."

Eli looked up at him.

" Didn't you ever know," he said, " of a man's takin' a cat off, to lose, that his little girl didn't want drowned, and leavin' him ashore, twenty or thirty miles, bee-line, from home, and that cat's bein' back again the next day, purrin' 'round 's if nothin' had happened?"

" Yes," said Mr. Eldridge—" knew of just such a case."

" Very well," said Eli; " how does he find his way home?"

" Don't know," said Mr. Eldridge; " always has been a standing mystery to me."

" Well;" said Eli, " mark my words. There's such a thing as arguin', and there's such a thing as knowin' outright; and when you'll tell me how that cat inquires his way home, I'll tell you how I know John Wood ain't guilty."

This made a certain sensation, and Eli's stock went up.

An old, withered man rapped on the table.

" That's so!" he said; " and there's other sing'lar things! How is it that a sea-farin' man, that's dyin' to home, will allers die on the ebb-tide? It never fails, but how does it happen? Tell me that! And there's more ways than one of knowin' things, too!"

“ I know that man ain’t guilty,” said Eli.

“ Hark ye !” said a dark old man with a troubled face, rising and pointing his finger toward Eli. “ *Know*, you say ? I *knew*, wunst. I *knew* that my girl, my only child, was good. One night she went off with a married man that worked in my store, and stole my money—and where is she now ?” And then he added, “ What I *know* is, that every man hes his price. I hev mine, and you hev yourn !”

The impugnement of Eli’s motives was evident to all.

“ ‘Xcuse me, Mr. Speaker,” said George Washington, rising with his hand in his bosom ; “ as de question is befo’ us, I wish to say that de las’ bro’ mus’ have spoken under ‘xcitement. Every man *don’* have his price ! An’ I hope de bro’ will recant—like as de Psalmist goes out o’ his way to say ‘ *In my haste* I said, All men are liars.’ He was a very busy man, de Psalmist—writin’ down hymns all day, sharpen’n’ his lead-pencil, bossin’ ‘roun’ de choir—callin’ Selah ! Well, bro’n an’ sisters’”—both arms going out, and his voice going up—“ one day, seems like, he was in gre’t haste—got to finish a psalm for a monthly concert, or such—and some man incorrupted him, and lied ; and bein’ in gre’t haste—and a little old Adam in him—he says, right off, quick : ‘ *All men are liars !*’ But see—when he gets a little time to set back and meditate, he says : ‘ Dis won’ do—dere’s Moses, an’ Job, an’ Paul—dey ain’t liars !’ An’

den he don' sneak out, and 'low he said, ' All men is lions,' or such. No ! de Psalmist ain't no such man ; but he owns up, an' 'xplains : '*In my haste,*' he says, ' I said it.' ''

The foreman rose and rapped.

" I await a motion," said he, " if our friend will allow me the privilege of speaking."

Mr. Washington calmly bowed.

Then the foreman, when nobody seemed disposed to move, speaking slowly, at first, and piecemeal, alternating language with smoke, gradually edged into the current of the evidence, and ended by going all over it again, with fresh force and point. His cigar glowed and chilled in the darkening room as he talked.

" Now," he said, when he had drawn all the threads together to the point of guilt, " what are we going to do upon this evidence ?"

" I'll tell you something," said Eli. " I didn't want to say it because I know what you'll all think, but I'll tell you, all the same."

" Ah !" said the foreman.

Eli stood up and faced the others.

" 'Most all o' you know what our Bar is in a south-east gale. They ain't a man here that 'uld dare to try and cross it when the sea's breakin' on it. The man that says he would, lies !" And he looked at the foreman, and waited a moment.

" When my wife took sick, and I stopped goin' to sea, two year ago, and took up boat-fishin', I didn't know half as much about the coast as the

young boys do, and one afternoon it was blowin' a gale, and we was all hands comin' in, and passin' along the Bar to go sheer 'round it to the west'ard, and Captain Fred Cook—he's short-sighted—got on to the Bar before he knew it, and then he had to go ahead, whether or no ; and I was right after him, and I s'posed he knew, and I followed him. Well, he was floated over, as luck was, all right ; but when I'd just got on the Bar, a roller dropped back and let my bowsprit down into the sand, and then come up quicker'n lightnin' and shouldered the boat over, t'other end first, and slung me into the water ; and when I come up, I see somethin' black, and there was John Wood's boat runnin' by me before the wind with a rush—and 'fore I knew an'thing he had me by the hair by one hand and in his boat, and we was over the Bar. Now, I tell you, a man that looks the way I saw him look when I come over the gunwale, face up, don't go 'round breakin' in and hookin' things. He hadn't one chance in five, and he was a married man, too, with small children. And what's more," he added, incautiously, " he didn't stop there. When he found out, this last spring, that I was goin' to lose my place, he lent me money enough to pay the interest that was overdue on the mortgage, of his own acord."

And he stopped suddenly.

" You have certainly explained yourself," said the foreman. " I think we understand you distinctly."

“There isn’t one word of truth in that idea,” said Eli, flushing up, “and you know it. I’ve paid him back every cent. I know him better’n any of you, that’s all, and when I know he ain’t guilty, I won’t say he is; and I can set here as long as any other man.”

“Lively times some folks’ll hev, when they go home,” said a spare tin-peddler, stroking his long yellow goatee. “Go into the store : nobody speak to you ; go to cattle-show : everybody follow you ’round ; go to the wharf : nobody weigh your fish ; go to buy seed-cakes at the cart : baker won’t give no tick.”

“How much does it cost, Mr. Foreman,” said the butcher, “for a man ’t’s obliged to leave town, to move a family out West? I only ask for information. I have known a case where a man had to leave—couldn’t live there no longer—wa’n’t wanted.”

There was a knock. An officer, sent by the judge, inquired whether the jury were likely soon to agree.

“It rests with you, sir,” said the foreman, looking at Eli.

But Eli sat doggedly with his hands in his pockets, and did not look up or speak.

“Say to the judge that I cannot tell,” said the foreman.

It was eight o’clock when the officer returned, with orders to take the jury across the street to the hotel, to supper. They went out in pairs, except

that the juryman who was left to fall in with Eli made three with the file ahead, and left Eli to walk alone. This was noticed by the by standers. At the hotel, Eli could not eat a mouthful. He was seated at one end of the table, and was left entirely out of the conversation. When the jury were escorted back to the court-house, rumors had evidently begun to arise from his having walked alone, for there was quite a little crowd at the hotel-door, to see them. They went as before: four pairs, a file of three, and Eli alone. Then the spectators understood it.

WHEN the jury were locked into their room again for the night, Mr. Eldridge sat down by Eli, and lit his pipe.

"I understand," he said, "just how you feel. Now, between you and me, there was a good-hearted fellow that kept me out of a bad mess once. I've never told anybody just what it was, and I don't mean to tell you now, but it brought my blood up standing, to find how near I'd come to putting a fine steamer and two hundred and forty passengers under water. Well, one day, a year or so after that, this man had a chance to get a good ship, only there was some talk against him, that he drank a little. Well, the owners told him they wanted to see me, and he come to me, and says he, 'Mr. Eldridge, I hope you'll speak a good word for me; if you do, I'll get the ship, but if they refuse me this one, I'm dished everywhere.' Well,

the owners put me the square question, and I had to tell 'em. Well, I met him that afternoon on Sacramento Street, as white as a sheet, and he wouldn't speak to me, but passed right by, and that night he went and shipped before the mast. That's the last I ever heard of him. But I had to do it.

"Now," he added, "this man's been good to you; but the case is proved, and you ought to vote with the rest of us."

"It ain't proved," said Eli. "The judge said that if any man had a reasonable doubt, he ought to hold out. Now, I ain't convinced."

"Well, that's easy said," replied Mr. Eldridge, a little hotly, and he arose, and left him.

The jurymen broke up into little knots, tilted their chairs back, and settled into the easiest positions that their cramped quarters allowed. Most of them lit their pipes; the captain, and one or two whom he honored, smoked fragrant cigars, and the room was soon filled with a dense cloud.

Eli sat alone by the window.

"Sometimes sell two at one house," said a lank book-agent, arousing himself from a reverie; "once sold three."

"I think the Early Rose is about as profitable as any," said a little farmer, with a large circular beard. "I used to favor Jacobs's Seedling, but they haven't done so well with me of late years."

"Sometimes," said the book-agent, picking his teeth with a quill, "you'll go to a house, and they'll say they can't be induced to buy a book of

any kind, historical, fictitious, or religious ; but you just keep on talking, and show the pictures— ‘ Grant in Boyhood,’ ‘ Grant a Tanner,’ ‘ Grant at Head-quarters,’ ‘ Grant in the White House,’ ‘ Grant before Queen Victoria,’ and they warm up, I tell you, and not infrequently buy.”

“ Do you sell de ‘ Illustrated Bible,’ ” asked Washington, “ wid de Hypocrypha ? ”

“ No ; I have a more popular treatise—the ‘ Illustrated History of the Bible.’ Greater variety. Brings in the surrounding nations, in costume. Cloth, three dollars ; sheep, three-fifty ; half calf, five-seventy-five, full morocco, gilt edges, seven-fifty. Six hundred and seven illustrations on wood and steel. Three different engravings of Abraham alone. Four of Noah—‘ Noah before the Flood,’ ‘ Noah Building the Ark,’ ‘ Noah Welcoming the Dove,’ ‘ Noah on Ararat.’ Steel engraving of Ezekiel’s Wheel, explaining prophecy. Jonah under the gourd, Nineveh in the distance.”

Mr. Eldridge and Captain Thomas had drifted into a discussion of harbors, and the captain had drawn his chair up to the table, and, with a cigar in his mouth, was explaining an ingeniously constructed foreign harbor. He was making a rough sketch, with a pen.

“ Here is north,” he said ; “ here is the coast-line ; here are the flats ; here are the sluice-gates ; they store the water here, in——”

Some of the younger men had their heads together, in a corner, about the tin-peddler, who was

telling stories of people he had met in his journeys, which brought out repeated bursts of laughter.

In the corner farthest from Eli, a delicate-looking man began to tell the butcher about Eli's wife.

"Twelve years ago this fall," he said, "I taught district-school in the parish where she lived. She was about fourteen then. Her father was a poor farmer, without any faculty. Her mother was dead, and she kept house. I stayed there one week, boarding 'round."

"Prob'ly didn't git not much of any fresh meat that week," suggested the butcher.

"She never said much, but it used to divert me to see her order around her big brothers, just as if she was their mother. She and I got to be great friends; but she was a queer piece. One day at school, the girls in her row were communicating, and annoying me, while the third class was reciting in 'First Steps in Numbers,' and I was so incensed that I called Lizzie—that's her name—right out, and had her stand up for twenty minutes. She was a shy little thing, and set great store by perfect marks. I saw that she was troubled a good deal, to have all of them looking and laughing at her. But she stood there, with her hands folded behind her, and not a smile or a word."

"Look out for a sullen cow," said the butcher.

"I felt afraid I had been too hasty with her, and I was rather sorry I had been so decided—although, to be sure, she didn't pretend to deny that she had been communicating."

"Of course," said the butcher: "no use lyin' when you're caught in the act."

"Well, after school, she stayed at her desk, fixing her dinner-pail, and putting her books in a strap, and all that, till all the rest had gone, and then she came up to my desk, where I was correcting compositions."

"Now for music!" said the butcher.

"She had been crying a little. Well, she looked straight in my face, and said she, 'Mr. Pollard, I just wanted to say to you that I wasn't doing anything at all when you called me up;' and off she went. Now, that was just like her—too proud to say a word before the school."

But here his listener's attention was diverted by the voice of the book-agent:

"The very best Bible for teachers, of course, is the limp-cover, protected edges, full Levant morocco, Oxford, silk-sewed, kid-lined, Bishop's Divinity Circuit, with concordance, maps of the Holy Land, weights, measures, and money-tables of the Jews. Nothing like having a really——"

"And so," said the captain, moving back his chair, "they let on the whole head of water, and scour out the channel to a T."

And then he rapped upon the table.

"Gentlemen," he said, "please draw your chairs up, and let us take another ballot."

The count resulted as before. The foreman muttered something which had a scriptural sound.

In a few moments, he drew Mr. Eldridge and two

others aside. "Gentlemen," he said to them, "I shall quietly divide the jury into watches, under your charge: ten can sleep, while one wakes to keep Mr. Smith discussing the question. I don't propose to have the night wasted."

And, by one man or another, Eli was kept awake.

"I DON'T see," said the book-agent, "why you should feel obliged to stick it out any longer. Of course, you are under obligations. But you've done more than enough already, so as that he can't complain of you, and if you give in now, everybody'll give you credit for trying to save your friend, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, for giving in to the evidence. So you'll get credit both ways."

An hour later, the tin-peddler came on duty. He had not followed closely the story about John Wood's loan, and had got it a little awry.

"Now, how foolish you be," he said, in a confidential tone. "Can't you see that if you cave in now, after stan'n' out nine hours"—and he looked at a silver watch with a brass chain, and stroked his goatee—"nine hours and twenty-seven minutes—that you've made jest rumpus enough so as't he won't dare to foreclose on you, for fear they'll say you went back on a trade. On t'other hand, if you hold clear out, he'll turn you out-o'-doors to-morrow, for a blind, so 's to look as if there wa'n't no trade between you. Once he gits

off, he won't know Joseph, you bet ! That's what I'd do," he added, with a sly laugh. "Take your uncle's advice."

"The only trouble with that," said Eli, shortly, "is that I don't owe him anything."

"Oh," said the peddler ; "that makes a difference. I understood you did."

Three o'clock came, and brought Mr. Eldridge. He found Eli worn out with excitement.

"Now I don't judge you the way the others do," said Mr. Eldridge, in a low tone, with his hand on Eli's knee. "I know, as I told you, just the way you feel. But we can't help such things. Suppose, now, that I had kept dark, and allowed to the owners that that man was always sober, and I had heard, six months after, of thirty or forty men going to the bottom because the captain was a little off his base ; and then to think of their wives and children at home. We have to do some hard things ; but I say, do the square thing, and let her slide."

"But I can't believe he's guilty," said Eli.

"But don't you allow," said Mr. Eldridge, "that eleven men are more sure to hit it right than one man ?"

"Yes," said Eli, reluctantly, "as a general thing."

"Well, there's always got to be some give to a jury, just as in everything else, and you ought to lay right down on the rest of us. It isn't as if we were at all squirmish. Now, you know that if you hold out, he'll be tried again."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Got to be—no other way," said Mr Eldridge.

"Now, the next time, there won't be anybody like you to stand out, and the judge'll know of this scrape, and he'll just sock it to him."

Eli turned uneasily in his chair.

"And then it won't be understood in your place, and folks'll turn against you every way, and, what's worse, let you alone."

"I can stand it," said Eli, angrily. "Let 'em do as they like. They can't kill me."

"They can kill your wife and break down your children," said Mr. Eldridge. "Women and children can't stand it. Now there's that man they were speaking of; he lived down my way. He sued a poor, shiftless fellow that had come from Pennsylvania to his daughter's funeral, and had him arrested and taken off, crying, just before the funeral begun—after they'd even set the flowers on the coffin; and nobody'd speak to him after that—they just let him alone; and after a while his wife took sick of it—she was a nice, kindly woman—and she had sort of hysterics, and, finally, he moved off West. And 'twasn't long before the woman died. Now, you can't undertake to do different from everybody else."

"Well," said Eli; "I know I wish it was done with."

Mr. Eldridge stretched his arms and yawned. Then he began to walk up and down, and hum, out of tune. Then he stopped at Captain Thomas's chair.

"Suppose we try a ballot," he said. "He seems to give a little."

In a moment the foreman rapped.

"It is time we were taking another ballot, gentlemen," he said.

The sleepers rose, grumbling, from uneasy dreams.

"I will write 'guilty' on twelve ballots," said the foreman, "and if any one desires to write in 'not,' of course he can."

When the hat came to Eli, he took one of the ballots and held it in his hand a moment; and then he laid it on the table. There was a general murmur. The picture which Mr. Eldridge had drawn loomed up before him. But with a hasty hand he wrote in "not," dropped in the ballot, and going back to his chair by the window, sat down.

There was a cold wave of silence.

Then Eli suddenly walked up to the foreman and faced him.

"Now," he said, "we'll stop. The very next turn breaks ground. If you, or any other man that you set on, tries to talk to me when I don't want to hear, to worry me to death—look out!"

How the long hours wore on! How easy, sometimes, to resist an open pressure, and how hard, with the resistance gone, to fight, as one that beats the air! How the prospect of a whole hostile town loomed up, in a mirage, before Eli! And then the picture rose before him of a long, stately bark, now building, whose owner had asked

him yesterday to be first mate. And if his wife were only well, and he were only free from this night's trouble, how soon, upon the long, green waves, he could begin to redeem his little home !

And then came Mr. Eldridge, kind and friendly, to have another little chat.

MORNING came, cold and drizzly. An officer knocked at the door, and called out, " Breakfast." And, in a moment, unwashed, and all uncombed, except the tin-peddler, who always carried a beard-comb in his pocket, they were marched across the street to the hotel.

There were a number of men on the piazza waiting to see them — jurymen, witnesses, and the accused himself, for he was on bail. He had seen the procession the night before, and, like the others, had read its meaning.

" Eli knows I wouldn't do it," he had said to himself, " and he's going to hang out, sure."

The jury began to turn from the court-house door. Everybody looked. A file of two men, another file, another, another ; would there come three men, and then one ? No ; Eli no longer walked alone.

Everybody looked at Wood ; he turned sharply away.

But this time the order of march in fact showed nothing, one way or the other. It only meant that the judge, who had happened to see the jury the night before returning from their supper, had sent

for the high sheriff in some temper—for judges are human—and had vigorously intimated that if that statesman did not look after his fool of a deputy, who let a jury parade secrets to the public view, he would——!

THE jury were in their room again. At nine o'clock came a rap, and a summons from the court.

The prosecuting attorney was speaking with the judge when they went in. In a moment he took his seat.

“John Wood!” called out the clerk, and the defendant arose. His attorney was not there.

“Mr. Foreman!” said the judge, rising. The jury arose. The silence of the crowded court-room was intense.

“Before the clerk asks you for a verdict, gentlemen,” said the judge, “I have something of the first importance to say to you, which has but this moment come to my knowledge.”

Eli changed color, and the whole court-room looked at him.

“There were some most singular rumors, after the case was given to you, gentlemen, to the effect that there had been in this cause a criminal abuse of justice. It is painful to suspect, and shocking to know, that courts and juries are liable ever to suffer by such unprincipled practices. After ten years upon the bench, I never witness a conviction of crime without pain; but that pain is light, compared with the distress of knowing of a wilful per-

version of justice. It is a relief to me to be able to say to you that such instances are, in my judgment, exceedingly rare, and—so keen is the awful searching power of truth—are almost invariably discovered.”

The foreman touched his neighbor with his elbow. Eli folded his arms.

“As I said,” continued the judge, “there were most singular rumors. During the evening and the night, rumor, as is often the case, led to evidence, and evidence has led to confession and to certainty. And the district attorney now desires me to say to you that the chief officer of the bank—who held the second key to the safe—is now under arrest for a heavy defalcation, which a sham robbery was to conceal, and that you may find the prisoner at the bar—not guilty. I congratulate you, gentlemen, that you had not rendered an adverse verdict.”

“Your Honor!” said Eli; and he cleared his throat; “I desire it to be known that, even as the case stood last night, this jury had not agreed to convict, and never would have!”

There was a hush, while a loud scratching pen indorsed the record of acquittal. Then Wood walked down to the jury-box and took Eli’s hand.

“Just what I told my wife all through,” he said. “I knew you’d hang out!”

ELI’S jury was excused for the rest of the day, and by noon he was in his own village, relieved,

too, of his most pressing burden : for George Cahoon had met him on the road, and told him that he was not going to the West, after all, for the present, and should not need his money. But, as he turned the bend of the road and neared his house, he felt a rising fear that some disturbing rumor might have reached his wife about his action on the jury. And, to his distress and amazement, there she was, sitting in a chair at the door.

“ Lizzie !” he said, “ what does this mean ? Are you crazy ?”

“ I’ll tell you what it means,” she said, as she stood up with a little smile and clasped her hands behind her. “ This morning, it got around and came to me that you was standing out all alone for John Wood, and that the talk was that they’d be down on you, and drive you out of town, and that everybody pitied *me*—*pitied me* ! And when I heard that, I thought I’d see ! And my strength seemed to come all back, and I got right up, and dressed myself. And what’s more, I’m going to get well now !”

And she did.

YOUNG STRONG OF "THE CLARION."

BY MILICENT WASHBURN SHINN.

IF you had asked any resident of Green's Ferry some eight years ago—say, in '76—who were the leading men of his town, he would doubtless have begun :

" Well, there's Judge Garvey, of course. Then there's Uncle Billy Green, who built the first shanty there in '49, and young Strong of 'The Clarion'—"

However he might continue his enumeration, it would certainly have been as above for the first three names. One you would have recognized, if you had been following State politics closely for some years ; for Judge Garvey was very regularly chosen State senator in his district, and had held the barren honor of presidential elector the last time his party carried the State. In '76, some of the papers were urging his nomination for Con-

gress, and politicians thought his chance of such a nomination increasing. It has not turned out so ; his name has quite dropped out of the papers, and it is said he does not certainly control his own county now ; but at that time he was the most potent political influence in three counties. What he influenced them to, I never clearly understood, for I cannot recall that I ever heard his name mentioned in connection with any measure or opinion.

A file of "The Clarion" during the four years that young Strong was editor would doubtless throw light on the matter. "The Clarion" was at this time a sort of voice crying in the wilderness about Reform, which was a very new idea, indeed, to its readers. Garvey did not like the paper, and young Strong disliked Garvey very much ; but the two men had kept on fairly good terms—not so rigid good terms, of course, as to forbid their expressing to third parties the frankest contempt for each other. The Judge had here the advantage, for Strong despised him indignantly, as a knave, while he despised Strong—or said he did—pityingly, as a fool. He must, however, have at bottom honored the young fellow with some serious antipathy ; for it was after all no laughing matter that a boy of twenty-five should come into "his Gaul, which he had conquered by arms," and filch away his home paper from under his very eyes. Moreover, though people read the editorials, laughed, and voted with the Judge just the same—they still did read them. However,

Judge Garvey certainly was more civil to Strong than Strong was to him.

As for Uncle Billy Green, his rank was due not only to his connection with the "first shanty" (a house of entertainment at the point where a trail turned from the river toward the mines), but to his having remained steadily on the spot ever since, putting up a larger building at intervals as the settlement gathered around him, until now he was proprietor of the American Eagle Hotel, a house of goodly dimensions and generous equipment—billiard-room, bowling alley, shooting-gallery. Nor did Uncle Billy Green own and conduct this house in a purely business spirit; a more modest one would have been more profitable; he liked to "do that much for the town." A man by the name of Gulliver had established the old rope-ferry, before the day of bridges, but it was naturally called Green's Ferry, being a ferry at Green's place. He had been of an undoubted valor in the Indian fights of early days, was full of reminiscences, had no personal objections to anybody or anything, and had long given over to Judge Garvey the trouble of forming his opinions.

Judge Garvey and young Strong were pretty sure to be put upon such boards or committees as the local affairs of the small town demanded; and in local matters they proved to pull together fairly well, however at odds they were politically. But in the end it was not over politics, but over the district school, that they fell out squarely. They

were both trustees, and as Green was the third, the board seemed in little danger from any too radical reforming tendencies young Strong might be guilty of, and the Judge had no thought of danger as he walked down to "The Clarion" office, a breathless September afternoon, a couple of days before the school should open.

He found young Strong in his editorial room. This was a corner of the printing-office, fenced off by a great screen pasted over with old exchanges. Behind this, Strong sat at his table, correcting proof energetically. It was evident that he took the editing of this little four-page weekly rather seriously—but, then, a man must needs be business-like to produce even four pages weekly with one assistant, and Strong had to economize time enough from strictly editorial functions to do a goodly share of type-setting and the rest of the mechanics of the office.

"I beg your pardon for interrupting you, Mr. Strong," said the Judge. "I perceive you are arduously occupied. But it becomes necessary to confer with you with regard to the school-teacher."

The Judge was a tall and vigorously built man—a little red-faced, but good-looking, if one did not insist on too fine a definiteness of outline. He spoke habitually with a certain inflation of manner, and tried to form himself upon a Southern type that was pretty abundant in our politics some years earlier. He was, however, a native of rural New York, early transplanted to California.

Strong turned in his chair, and sitting sidewise, rested his elbow on the proof-sheets, holding the pencil still in his fingers.

"Well?" he said. "I thought everything was settled."

"Assuredly." Judge Garvey rested his folded arms upon the pile of books stacked at the rear of the table, and leaned over them in a friendly way. "Mr. Coakley is to arrive Sunday evening, and will begin the term on Monday morning, to the great satisfaction, I can guarantee, of all concerned. A slight and merely temporary embarrassment has arisen, with respect to which a few words will make it all right. In point of fact, the young woman with whom we previously held correspondence—who, you will remember, broke her engagement with us to take a more advantageous position—is here."

The Judge stopped for question or comment, but as Strong waited for explanation, he went on :

"She has, it appears, failed after all to secure that, and come here expecting to fall back upon our school, not having heard that it was engaged."

"Well, that's unfortunate for her," said Strong, "but you can't ship Coakley now."

"Your views coincide exactly with my own, my dear sir." The Judge straightened up with some relief. "I have only to ask, then, for a note to the lady to that effect, that my own explanation already given may be corroborated."

Strong began to look alert and suspicious at this.

"Views coincide?" he said. "What two views could there be? What does she say brought her here?"

"She's got an idea that she's got first claim on the place," said the Judge, plumping suddenly into colloquial diction. He had a trick of doing so when he got down to business. It would have had something the effect of candid confession, produced by a maiden's plain-hair days alternated with her waved-hair days, had not the grandiloquence of tone and manner become so far second nature that it ran through both his dialects, and lessened the contrast. "You can't always make a woman see sense."

Strong looked suspiciously at him a few seconds. "Well, I'll go see her this evening," he said. "Where's she staying?"

"That is a totally superfluous tax on your time, my dear Strong," said the Judge, leaning persuasively across the books again. "I have here a mere formal line, stating that Coakley is the regularly engaged teacher of the school, and will begin next Monday; your signature to it—Green's and mine are already there—will be all that is necessary." He pushed pen and ink toward Strong with his exaggerated air of courtesy.

"Oh, I'm not going to sign things that way, you know. I'll go see her." He turned and drew his proof-sheets to him with an air of dismissal.

The Judge stood up very straight, expanded his chest, and folded his arms according to his con-

ception of the Virginian manner. "Am I to understand, sir, that you question my veracity?"

"I don't question anything," said the young man, impatiently. "I'll know what I'm talking about when I've seen her."

"Permit me to suggest, sir"—the Judge was approaching his platform manner—"permit me to suggest, sir, that Mr. Green and myself constitute a majority of the board, and Mr. Green, sir—Uncle Billy Green—has confidence in my honor, and will sustain my action, whatever line *you* may be persuaded to adopt."

"Oh, as to that," said Strong, exaggerating his crispness of manner in protest against the Judge's staginess, "I'm clerk of the board, and you can't hold a legal meeting nor pay a salary without me. What's the reason you don't want me to see her?"

Judge Garvey unfolded his arms, fell back a step, and dropped easily into the sonorous declamation that made the stalwart Judge no inconspicuous figure on the floor of the Legislature. The newspapers, of course, were responsible for his language—as for the rest of his education; but such as it was, he used it fluently, and the declamatory manner was, to his constituency, quite an essential of eloquence—the prime difference, in fact, between oratory and plain talking.

"You cast aspersions upon my honor, sir. Through me you insult the people of Green's Ferry—of this county—of this district—the enlightened and honorable constituency who it is my

proud honor to represent. I sco-r-n to answer your insinuations, sir. They will be hurled back upon yourself by the united voice and righteous indignation of my justly aroused fellow-townsmen, by the voters of this noble district—I may say, by the whole State of California—to which I am not unknown, sir.”

Half-a-dozen of the justly aroused fellow-townsmen were straggling in from the street, for in Green’s Ferry a sprinkling of the citizens spend the warm afternoons sitting in absolute tranquillity on boxes and barrels here and there, under the awnings of the several business blocks ; and the knowledge that a row was at last on between Judge Garvey and young Strong reached them at the first peal. The Judge, alive to the increase of his audience, raised his voice a shade, and went on with a curious mixture of complacency and genuine wrath.

“Is it lack of confidence that has sent me to represent my honorable constituency in the legislative halls of California, Mr. Strong? Have I received that proud token of esteem only to be insulted by one whose obscurity is his only shield ; who, with unknown record, with no recommendation save his own overwhelming self-esteem, comes among us to sow dissent in peaceful counsels, and draw scorn and contempt upon his own head by impotent and futile attacks upon those whom he is powerless to harm ?”

This rounded the climax well, so the Judge only

added : " The call you propose, sir, I shall regard as a direct insult to myself," and strode dramatically from the room.

The papered screen went crashing to the floor behind him. The justly aroused fellow-townsmen looked after him, laughing but admiring.

" Laid you out, didn't he, Strong ?"

" That's the way he does it at Sacramento. Oh, the Judge is a real orator—there's no doubt of that."

" *He* don't have to make his speech up beforehand. No, sir, right where he is, any time of day, he just turns the faucet, and there it comes."

" What was the row, anyway, Strong ?"

" I don't know myself ; something about a teacher—he began to bluster all of a sudden." Strong walked over to the screen, picked it up, set it straight along a crack with intense precision, and went back to his seat. " Drunk, isn't he ? I haven't heard him take the stump that way since election. He's always made rather a point of not quarrelling with me, too."

" Oh, he's no drunker'n usual," answered with candor a fellow-townsmen. " The Judge ain't really himself until he's a little off. He didn't blow so without some reason ; don't you fool yourself—not if *I* know the man."

" Well, if he's got any game he must have come to his last chance in it, to try bullying on *me*," said Strong ; and then another of the group asked :

"What row could there be about a teacher, Strong? Thought you'd given him his man."

The pencil rolled from the edge of the table across the floor at Strong's movement of attention. "Coakley?—what of him?"

The man began to laugh, and one or two others joined in. One of them said a little offensively: "Pretty good on you, youngster! You took too big a contract for your age when you undertook to keep up with Judge Garvey. He'll give you odds and take you in, every time."

Strong reddened a little, but waited to be answered with very fair composure.

"Didn't you really know, Strong? The Judge scored one on you that time, then. Why, he's been Garvey's man in Sierra Township one or two elections now. Used to be a Millerite preacher, before your day, but he broke down at that. Good hand in county politics, but he's always completely out of business between times. Why you remember him, Strong—he was round with the Judge election times—cross-eyed fellow, with black siders."

"*That* fellow? Why, he can't spell straight! The way of it was, Judge Garvey told us only Tuesday that the teacher we'd got—first-rate certificates—had backed out; and we couldn't put off beginning school any longer, nor hear of any teacher to be had; so when he produced this man, we had really no choice. I suppose I needn't ask where he got his certificates."

"No—Garvey's solid with this county board and superintendent."

"Disgraceful!" said Strong; whereat all laughed, except one who had lost a ranch a few years before during business dealings with the Judge.

"Oh, he's a scamp—I wouldn't trust him out of sight with his baby's silver mug," said this man, with feeling. The rest laughed again. In Green's Ferry a certain easy-going good-heartedness is required by the public conscience, rather than decalogue virtues. Garvey liked sharp practice—all right; if you were yourself hurt, you would naturally begin to vote against him; otherwise, it was none of your business, except as successful rascality had a claim on your admiration. Young Strong liked to write furious reform editorials—all right; if you were the one hit, you would swear at Strong and stop your subscription until a hit on some one else made you renew it; otherwise, it was none of your business and lively reading. They leaned against the wall and desk, and began with perfect good-nature to tell stories of the Judge. "R'member the time he got that Mexican ranch? Fellow thought it was a bill of sale for thirty acres he was signing, and it was three hundred."

"Best thing was when he made old man Meeker believe he was dying, and deed over a good fifty thousand dollars in stock to his daughter—and married the girl, sir, before the old fellow found

he was good for twenty years more. He made the air smell of brimstone the rest of his life if you mentioned Garvey to him ! Drowned in a ford a winter or two later, after all. Used to live in a little shanty up Indian Crick and raise potatoes—and Garvey sent him a cow—cheekiest thing !"

Strong turned sharply away from the laugh that followed, and went on with his work, while they slowly dispersed. He worked on savagely with brows drawn together. "It isn't so much the existence of scoundrels like Garvey that gets me," he was saying to himself, "as the way the whole crowd of them take him." He stopped to read over the words he was correcting—they were editorial :

"Was ever folly greater than this of our community, in dropping everything else to run after money. For what do you expect to do with it when you get it? Better eating, and drinking, and the privilege of being toadied to by those who want to make something out of you—what more can you get out of money, if you have never made anything of *yourself*? Just as a pig, if he might take his choice whether he would be turned into a man or would be moved into a cosier sty, with more unbounded swill, would doubtless choose the sty !"

"My broom against the ocean," he said ; but he went on correcting doggedly.

And, not to conceal from you what was in reality the most significant fact about Will Strong—the

key to about everything he thought and did—he was mentally submitting this editorial, as he had submitted every other he had written, to the test of the probable opinion of a young woman he had not seen nor heard from for two years, but who nevertheless constituted to his mind the chief motive for existence—if not the chief and sufficient explanation of the human race's having been created at all. You must realize, before trying to understand his story, that Will Strong was really a very romantic young man indeed, though he pretended to Green's Ferry that he was not.

Outside the screen, the strips of sun through the western window and open door lengthened across the meagre collection of dusty fonts of type, the small press, the piles of papers. The black-fingered, red-haired boy setting type among them reflected that it must be nearly dinner-time, and turned to see how far in the hot strips had crept—turned, and stood staring ; for he met squarely the inquiring look of a pair of clear eyes, and became aware of a lady in the doorway.

It is probable that Jim had never dreamed in his life of any other social distinction than that between rich and poor, notorious and obscure, nor was he a lad of perceptions ; yet he knew at once that this was a very unusual sort of lady for Green's Ferry. If he had been a man of the social world he would have known that she was a gentlewoman of notably high-bred appearance. She glanced, not without dismay, about the shabby

work-room, as if she felt herself where she had no business to be. Nevertheless, she came forward frankly, and asked in the friendly way of one whose station needs no asserting :

" Mr. Strong ?—one of the school-board ?—Is he here ?"

" Yes'm." The boy made no motion, but stood blankly staring.

" May I see him, please ?"

" Lady to see you, Mr. Strong," shouted Jim, standing still.

In the few seconds before Strong emerged, the lady stood her ground in the middle of the floor, with some appearance of anxiety. She was certainly a very noticeable person, and came nearer to warranting that strong word " beautiful " than falls often to the lot of woman. It was a matter of outline more than color, however, for she had not much of that about her—brown hair, blue-gray eyes, skin of a warm paleness. All this low coloring, however, was so perfect of its sort, that it gave something the effect of a fine etching—a rich distinctness attained by shades, not colors. Instead of being outshone by more brilliant-hued women, Miss Northrop had always had the effect of making them look chromo-like. So, too, a certain nobility and self-forgetfulness of manner made the more elaborate manners of others seem the crude device of inferiority. It was a good deal due to her eyes ; she had most wonderful eyes, and I doubt if any man or many women ever met them in a full

look without feeling a little stir of pulse—whether it was in the lashes, or in the sweet straightforwardness of look, utterly devoid of coquetry, or in the depth of the gray, or in what; certain it is that no one ever saw Miss Northrop without talking of her beautiful eyes.

"A lady to see him?" The word in Green's Ferry defined only the sex. Some one with a notice of a flock of sheep for sale, which she wanted to get in as a local; or with an ill-spelled poem; or—by George, yes—that school-mistress. Lucky she had not met Garvey there—poor girl! Strong laid his pencil down, and came out from behind the screen good-naturedly enough—and stopped short. What a thing to happen to a man, that he should live and move and have his being for a dozen years in the thought of one woman, should count a world worth living in because she was somewhere on it, and a pitiful human race worth working for because they were her fellow-creatures—and should come out from behind his screen, and see her before his eyes—on his dingy work-room floor—out of her four thousand miles' distance!

They had been four years schoolmates in a New England High School. Will was a farmer's lad, from an outlying, rocky village, who worked for his board while he went to school. He came of an unschooled, hard-working, God-fearing yeoman race. Winifred could look up every line of her descent, through vista of governors, college-presi-

dents, and ministers, back to Colonial aristocracy and gentry beyond sea. Her great-grandfathers had carried swords in Revolutionary battles, where Will's had followed with muskets. Winifred herself was one of those flowers into which excellent family trees break occasionally—flowers so lovely that no excellence of the tree seems enough to account for them. If she had any core of aristocratic coldness, it was so overlaid by a sweet humaneness, a frank generosity of impulse, that no one would have known it. If she had been a man, to have a valet, she would have been a hero to him.

Even in the democracy of school, Will Strong knew well enough the difference between his shy awkwardness and her pleasant frankness; and knew that though he could meet school requirements about as well as she, yet his mental range was crude and narrow beside hers; and any one could see that in the town where he was an unknown boy she was an important young lady. These things would not have counted for much had not some mediæval follower of some exiled king dropped down into the boy's temperament that passion of self-abasing loyalty that is rather an anachronism in our democratic days. They had been on terms of friendliness rather than friendship in school, but that was due more to his shyness than anything else. She had really given to him more opportunities than to most of her schoolmates; she liked his integrity and earnestness.

He had looked to college as the natural door between his world and hers ; after four years at New Haven he might seek her acquaintance without audacity. To that end he had laboriously accumulated money, and had even passed his matriculation, when his father's death made him indispensable on the poor little farm. Since then he had doggedly plodded alone through the college curriculum, but without finding in it the mysterious pass-word that he had expected into the intellectual aristocracy. Some two years before, his mother's death and the growing up of younger brothers had left him free to seek his fortune in California. At twenty-seven he had lost his fresh look and boyish shyness ; he looked older than he was, but he was really very youthful, and believed in all sorts of abstractions beginning with capitals. His mental furniture, being obtained from books, not people, was not quite in the style of the present decade, and he read Carlyle and Emerson more than Herbert Spencer. His creed had, therefore, quite transcendentalism enough to accommodate without incongruity his little private deification.

Once in every year or two, as opportunity took him near her home, he had called on her, and had multiplied each call mightily by thinking of it before and after. He had also kept up a stupid correspondence with a schoolmate who had lived in the same town with her, for the chance of her name being mentioned. Within a couple of years, however, she had lost her father and gone to relatives

in New York, so he had lost exact knowledge even of her whereabouts.

She spoke before he had found his voice—without an instant's hesitation, indeed. "Oh, Will Strong!" she cried, stepping quickly toward him and holding out her hand. "I *hoped* it was you!"

He took the offered hand, and said to himself that his own was consecrated by the touch to clean deeds forever. He would not have known how to address her, but he followed her leading.

"It is Winifred Northrop!" he said. "What is it? Can I do something for you?"

"You are school-committee man, are you not?" Anxiety, relief, and trust mingled in her voice.

"Trustee—yes. Why," he cried, "it isn't possible that *you* are the lady!"

She laughed. "I suppose the lady must be I."

He did not smile. He even lost color with wrath. "Garvey has dared to play you some trick!—I did not dream—" he went on, eagerly, "Garvey kept the letters in his hands, and bungled over the name, so I did not once fairly catch it."

He turned back to his corner, and put the remaining bit of proof into his pocket. New heavens and new earth had come into existence since the last pencil mark on it.

"Jim," he said, "I'm called off on school-business. You get as much of that set up as you can before dinner, and then lock up; and I'll come down and make the corrections in the editorials before I go to bed. Now—Winifred—if I may

walk home with you, we'll get to the bottom of Garvey's tricks. Villain !"

The epithet was so fervent, and so entirely without humorous intent, that Miss Northrop laughed again as they walked out into the dull, hot September afternoon sun. The board sidewalk was uneven and full of projecting nails and splinters, and she held her thin, blue-gray dress prettily aside from them ; Will noted the gesture with admiration as intense as unreasonable. It seemed to him peculiarly admirable that she should draw her hat a little forward to shade her eyes, and should take just the length of step that she did ; the absolutely right step for a lady was thenceforth settled ; since then, he has insisted unreasonably upon a certain shade as the only right thing in gray, as if he held in his own mind some positive standard beyond the realm of variable taste.

The two or three business blocks—rows of slight frame-buildings, more of them saloons than would seem possible—were very quiet ; Green's Ferry is the shipping point of a wide stock-raising district, and all its activity centres about the railroad station at stated times daily. The justly aroused fellow-townsmen were all back under the awnings—leaning against the wall by the post-office, sitting on boxes by the grocery ; some indolently telling stories and chaffing ; some looking sleepily before them in absolute repose ; some in various stages of inert drunkenness. All stared curiously at young Strong and the strange lady, and prepared to

talk them over afterward, but no one addressed him.

They turned aside soon into a broad cross street with no sidewalk, where the coarse dust was in places ankle deep. Behind them, beyond the main street, a few groups of yellowing cottonwoods on bare banks of reddish clay marked the course of the Sacramento ; before them the street faded into a limitless expanse of gravel, thinly dotted in the distance with dull green oaks, and bounded by long knolls, like wrinkles in the plain, dark with oaks against the smoky sky of September—a sky dull blue above, dull gray near the horizon.

Along either side of the street the flimsy wooden houses were set back, each in its yard, and surrounded by oleanders ; sometimes there would be a few parched roses, a trellis of Madeira-vine, a patch of carefully nursed grass, often a row of China trees, whose fallen black seeds stippled the dust—but always the great rosy clumps of oleanders, glorying in the heat and drought. Every evening after dinner the owners come out, and stand watering these gardens with hose and sprinkler, till all along the street there is a murmur like rain and a smell of damp earth, and here and there through the warm twilight a glimpse of the white sprays of water ; while the families sit on the porches and doorstep, and gossip and laugh. At this hour, however, the little gardens and splendid oleanders lay hot and deserted in the dusty afternoon.

"I haven't till now had time to spare from being anxious to be interested," Miss Northrop said. "I was rather panic-stricken this morning, and things were awful, instead of interesting, in proportion to their newness."

This bit of pathos stiffened Will's manner with the awkwardness of over-feeling, as he asked: "Now, what can I do for you—Winifred?"

The awkwardness made him more like the school-boy Will; and then, a familiar face four thousand miles from home seems more familiar than it really is. Miss Northrop answered confidently: "I will tell you all about it, and then you will know what to do. I wrote to Judge Garvey—some one referred me to him at Sacramento—and asked if I might teach the school. He wrote back that I might, fixed the day, and directed me to a boarding-place that he had engaged for me. So I came by yesterday evening's train, and sent word that I was here. This morning he called and told me—with most oppressive civility—that as I had not answered his last letter, the place had been given to some one else. He said 'professional etiquette' here demands an answer in such a case, and failure to answer is equivalent to a withdrawal of the application."

"He lied," said Will, parenthetically, walking along with his eyes on the ground; she, on the contrary, looked at him often, with frank directness.

"He did not impress me," she said, "as the

soul of candor. I said as little as possible to him, but when he was gone I asked about the rest of the committee, and as soon as I heard your name I hoped it was you ; I knew you were somewhere in California. This afternoon I received his letter written to prevent my coming. It had followed me up here by the same train that I came on." She held the letter in her hand, and Will quietly took it and kept it. "I would not raise any controversy about such a thing," she went on, "if I had any idea in the world where else to go or what to do." Her voice sharpened a little again, with a note of pathos.

Will did not know how to answer without seeming to question or comment, so there came a pause ; then he said :

"This Coakley was an electioneering agent of Garvey's, and doesn't know enough to teach babies. He seems to have turned up suddenly wanting help, and the Judge is willing enough to keep him on hand and under obligations until next election."

Miss Northrop stopped short and looked at him with brows a little raised, and her bearing became impalpably more distant.

"But I cannot enter into contest with—these men for permission to teach school here," she said.

She was right, in her quick feeling that Will Strong's training could not have made work and discomfort and contact with vulgarity seem outside the sphere of women. If it had been one of

his own sisters he would have said : " Oh, well, we have to take the world as we find it. Brace up, little girl ; I'll put you safe through, and you'll find it's not so bad, after all."

But what he said to Winifred Northrop was : " It is outrageous ! Such brutes as Garvey have no business to look at a lady ! If you really prefer not to take the school," he went on, with some embarrassment, " I hope you will call on me to help you in any other way ; but if you want the school you shall have it, and no annoyance with it that I can help."

Miss Northrop repented that she had repented her confidence. " I remembered that you were kind of old, Will"—and her manner was irresistibly winning when she said such a thing—" but you are so very kind now that you make me ashamed. I only meant to ask you what I must do. Yes, I must take this position if I can, for I have no alternative."

" There is nothing for you to do," he said. " It is my place, as an officer of the school, to see that its rightful teacher is not defrauded."

" So it is," she said, relieved. " But I am none the less grateful."

" It is a pleasure to me to be able to do anything for you," he said, gravely, somewhat stiffly—from his tone you would not have suspected much more truth than usual in the formula.

She only said : " You are very kind," and then he lifted his hat, and left her at Mrs. Stutt's gate.

He deliberately and literally believed, as he

walked down the street—directly to Green's—that he was the happiest man in the world. For that matter, it is not impossible that he was. He was absolutely innocent of conscious hyperbole in saying, "It would be worth a life-time of trouble only to have *seen* her ; and I know her and am able to do her a service !"

He scored one advantage in having seen Miss Northrop early ; he saw Green before Garvey had talked with him. The report of the quarrel had by no means failed to reach "The American Eagle," and when Strong came in Uncle Billy Green was just expressing himself with regard to Coakley :

"Of course the Judge'll provide for his man when he gets a chance. That's where he's sharp. And if Coakley is smart enough to suit Judge Garvey, he's smart enough to teach *my* children—that's what *I* say."

A private audience with him would have been merely postponing the hour of general discussion, so Strong made a brief exposition of his case—gently enough, but with considerable force—then and there, displaying the letter he carried by way of proof. He hardly expected to elicit anything but the usual laugh and comment on the Judge's smartness. But there was a marked seriousness of tone in the remarks when he ended.

"Well, that *is* pretty rough."

"Yes, sir, that's going too far. The Judge ought to know where to stop. I don't stand by no

man when it comes to a shabby trick on an unprotected school-marm."

"A real lady, too—I could see that when she went by with you, Strong."

Even Green said, uneasily, "No, I shouldn't think the Judge ought to do that, quite."

It was evident that Green's Ferry drew its lines as much as any other town. The moral support it offered Strong was mainly negative, however, and Green, after several alternate conversations with his two fellow trustees during this Saturday evening, went off early Sunday morning to visit his married daughter at the old Meeker place, leaving word that they must fix it between them. Judge Garvey closed the somewhat stormy conference of Saturday evening with a promise to break down Miss Northrop's school in a week, and Strong's paper in a month. "Do you flatter yourself I should not have had your contemptible sheet in powder under my feet, sir, before this, if I had thought it worth the attention?" Nevertheless, as there was nothing on which the Judge prided himself more than on his invariable civility to ladies ("the courtly Judge" was his favorite phrase in writing up a local notice of any affair at which he had been present), Strong, having possession of the school-house key, was able to put Miss Northrop into possession on Monday morning without opposition. The Judge even visited her during the day and addressed the school with extreme suavity.

He was, however, very seriously affronted, and

had not passed his Sunday without diligent preparation among parents and children to make Miss Northrop's position untenable. It would have been no difficult task, either, but for an altogether unprecedented obstacle—a factor that he had not dreamed of in his calculations, and that Strong himself had underestimated. The children, who had gone to school Monday morning primed for mutiny, surrendered their hearts in a body to Miss Northrop by night ; three days later, Uncle Billy Green's niece, who taught the primary school, gave in adoring allegiance ; by the end of the week everybody who had seen her was her advocate. It was certainly an unprecedented thing that Judge Garvey's best exertions should come to naught, because of a woman's way of smiling and speaking ; but Miss Northrop's tenure of the school was secure. It was not entirely speech and smile, however. Miss Northrop was interested in everything, and consequently had common ground with everybody ; and she met each one on that ground, not so much ignoring as temporarily forgetting differences.

The year wore on from gray to gray ; the parching north wind poured down the plain and darkened the air with gritty dust ; the sky, though cloudless, grew murkier every day. Then the wind shifted to the south, and the sky grew darker yet with surging heaps of clouds, and at last down came the late November rain ; and next morning Miss Northrop could see, like a miracu-

lous creation of the night, up and down every east-and-west street, a range of azure mountains along either horizon, snow-crowned, clear-cut, against an exquisite blue sky. Every two or three weeks the surge of clouds would come rolling up with the south wind, and the rain would come down in torrents for days, till the Sacramento, yellow with mud, roared level with its banks; and then the storm would break away, and there would be a week or two of blue sky and brilliant air and green earth.

One Sunday in March, between the early and the latter rains, Miss Northrop and Will Strong walked out together several miles over the plain. The gravel had long disappeared under green bur-clover and *filaria*, thickly dotted with the little yellow clover blossoms, the lilac ones of the *filaria*, and with small blue gilies. The flocks and herds had been driven down from the mountains where they spend their summers and autumns, and the air was full of the bleating of lambs. Up and down either horizon, converging toward the north, were the long ranks of the Sierras and Coast Range, deep blue, ruggedly tipped with white peaks of all shapes—the Lassen Buttes, the Yallo Balleys, and many a lesser one. Northward, in the interval between the ranges, miles and miles away, the solitary peak of Shasta rose above the dark oak-knolls, sharp-white from base to tip, against a stainless sky. They sat down on the warm clover, beside a noisy yellow stream that ran

full to its banks on its way to the Sacramento. Winifred pushed back her hat, dropped her hands in her lap, and let her senses be played upon by the delicious air, the blue and white of mountains and sky and clouds, the luminous green, the rushing of water close by, and the bleating of flocks in the distance. It gave Will a good chance to watch her face—the sweetness of the mouth ; the nobility of the level brows ; the frankness of the eyes ; the soft wave of her hair. There was a marked sadness in her face in repose ; to wonder why, was to transgress the code of loyal humility that Will set himself ; he had not even considered it due chivalry to speculate, much less ask, as to the reason of so amazing a phenomenon as her presence in California at all, and the incongruity of her school-teaching. Her pose was perfect, and yet nothing could be more unconscious. Was that marvellous spontaneity, that simple dignity, the regular thing among the men and women Winifred belonged with ? It made him feel left very far out to think so. How incapable of effort for admiration she was, yet how invariably admirable !

She caught him looking at her, in time. “ What is it ? ” she said, simply.

He colored with some confusion, but confessed a piece of his thought. “ I was wondering if you really do not care at all for admiration. Most people would think they got the good of their living in being praised a fraction as much as you’ve been. If that’s impertinent I beg your pardon ; you asked me.”

The portion of aristocrat's pride that was in Winifred was largely concentrated in an objection to talking of herself or letting other people do it ; so she looked a little annoyed. She began with some constraint :

" Yes—I care—at first—when it is the right one that praises. But there is always a reaction of self-distrust. It seems humiliating," she went on more frankly, " to have been praised for having done some common thing—solved a problem, or written a poem, or handled a piano—a little more or less cleverly, when one comes to think what education and art are. And *personal* admiration—that always seems a contemptible sort of folly, if you think of what great things there are to do and be in the world, and the lives the great lonely souls have lived."

" Your achievement seems little to you," said Will, with some gloom, " because, I suppose, more always opens to you. To me, who have made none—"

" Why, Will," she cried, with the most genuine dissent. " You have done more than almost any one I know. Do you call it nothing to do a college curriculum alone and under all sorts of hindrances ? And I know that it was done well and thoroughly."

" Oh, yes," he said, indifferently, tossing bits of clover into the stream, " I could have passed an A. B. fast enough. But you know better than I do, Winifred, that that's the least of a college course. I've seen fellows that had to work their

way through and had no spare time or energy, and they always lacked a great deal of the college flavor ; the education didn't permeate 'em. Then there are other things—music, art, social opportunities, capacity of expression—that are no slight things to miss ; they make up more of first-class living than Greek optatives or the equation of a surface. It isn't really possible for a man, not backed by circumstances, to get himself into a position that some are born to." He let the clover be and looked up. " Oh, I'm not growling, Wini-fred," he said, hastily, smiling, as he saw her about to speak eagerly. " I'm only making philosophical observations, and using myself as an illustration. Why in the world should I growl to find myself stranded half way up, when there is a townful of people behind us clear down at the bottom, and no more their fault than mine ? Why should I mind that I am left out from the best chances, any more than that a thousand other fellows are ? ' What Act of Legislature was there that ' I should be cultured ? "

She was leaning forward with her irresistible eyes full on his, and face and voice vivified with that sympathetic expressiveness that makes speech count for far more than the words.

" Will, that is true," she cried, " but it is only part of the truth. ' Close thy ' Carlyle ; ' open thy ' Emerson. It's true, you have missed some things that you deserved to have and that many of your inferiors have for nothing. But your life is only

begun, and your ability and pluck can do so much that you needn't waste regret on anything they may fail to do. Even if circumstances be unconquerable that stand between you and some good things, are the things you have gained instead of less value?—your courage and patience, your self-reliance and trustworthiness and helpfulness? Why, Will, *character* is worth more than knowledge of art, or familiarity with good society; just to live bravely is worth more than all the rest. Do you suppose I would exchange your companionship for that of a dozen 'cultured' people who could talk to me about 'sincere furniture'—this was in the last decade, remember—"and Rauss's heads, as you can't, and who never showed me one spark of genuine feeling about the great things of life, as you can?"

Will was overwhelmed. Winifred had talked of his affairs much, following them with unvarying interest, but of himself or herself, never; and it was actually a new idea to the young fellow that she could have any very high opinion of him. Moreover, it was the first time he had heard her speak with unveiled and ardent feeling.

"You do not mean"—and he formed his words with difficulty—"that I could meet on equal ground people that—such people as *your* associates."

"No; you would meet most of them on higher ground. If they didn't know it, that would be their discredit. I should think you could see

that," she added, in a quick, parenthetical aversive way, "from *their* associate. If you want to get a higher opinion of the value of your life, compare it with an ordinary, foolish, useless one—like mine." She gave him no chance to answer that, but was the next moment on her feet, suggesting that they walk on, and wishing they were not to stop short of the Lassen Buttes, whose apparent nearness, scores of miles distant as they were, was still a perpetual surprise to her eastern eyes.

When everything has been made ready for it, a few sentences may easily make or mark an era in life ; and it is probable that if Miss Northrop had not in effect told young Strong he was quite good enough for her, he might have remained her contented vassal for years. Six months of being her nearest friend worked their result, to be sure ; but the humility they were gnawing at was of mediævally tough fibre, and of twice six years' growth. His depreciation of himself, however, had only meant sense of distance from her ; therefore, his sense of the significance of her speech was enormous. He felt his relation to her changed ; he was shaken from all his moorings, and thrown into a mighty agitation that possessed him night and day, and only grew with time. For this was what it all came to : Was the distance between Winifred and himself greater than the distance between her and any other man ? And when he had once thought that, the gate was open, and the besieging host marched in and took possession of every corner of

him with longing and desire and a madness of tenderness.

He thought of nothing else. He wrote his editorials and set type under an unceasing sense of it, as people have done brain-work and finger-work to an accompaniment of unceasing physical pain. For there was nothing joyous about it to him ; it was all a bitter pain of mad desire to be something to her—to secure her, somehow, before this great, dark future swept her away from him. And yet the latter rains came and went, the green faded from the ground, the mountains grew dimmer and duller, and at last disappeared in the summer murk, before he took in his own mind the next step—from lover to suitor, as before from vassal to lover.

He did so simply because he could not stand it any longer. It stood to reason that there must be a way out of such active torments. And, after all, why not he as well as any other man ? It was absurd to suppose that Winifred could ever be *in love* with any man, as a man would be with her. It occurred to Will that the thing to do was natural enough, after all—not to ask Winifred's love, but to offer her his. And he walked down to Mrs. Stutt's to do it, one August evening, a little before school opened after vacation. He was in good spirits, too ; to come to action and to speech, after so long repression, was an inestimable relief. And she had been doubly friendly to him all this time.

Mrs. Stutt was in her little strip of grass and oleanders. "That you, Mr. Strong?" she called out cheerily as he lifted the gate-latch. "Well, Miss Northrop's in the sitting-room, I s'pose. You go right in, and I'll come in when I've done my watering."

"Thank you," said Will, absently, and walked on into the house. Winifred was not in the dark little sitting-room. He walked to the open window and stood there, expecting her to come in presently. There were veils of Madeira vine over the window, just opening their whitish tassels of bloom, and the air was full of the smell of them. Mrs. Stutt began to water the grass outside, and the shower of water from her hose glimmered through the Madeira vine; the noise of the water came to him, and the crying of crickets, and the smell of the freshly wet earth. Then he heard a step on the porch, and saw Winifred go down the short path to the gate. He could see by her white dress that she stood still there; so he went out, too, to join her. Mrs. Stutt was watering at the other side of the house now, and the two were alone.

Will stopped a moment in the darkness and faint odor of a great oleander, a few feet from the motionless girl at the gate, to realize well the grace of her dim white figure, and her unconscious attitude. She stood in a weary way, with her head a little fallen back, and her hands hanging loosely clasped before her. There was so much and so incomprehensible emotion in the attitude, that

Will felt vaguely thrust out into another world from that where her interests lay. She had not heard him approach, for the train from the south was just coming to a stand at the station, not a stone's throw off, and there was a great noise of jarring cars, and shouting men, and escaping steam, and ringing bell. He waited till the noise should be quite over. Some one came walking rapidly from the station ; Will, glancing at the dark figure, thought it had, even in this dimness, an unfamiliar look. It paused close by the gate.

"Winifred !"

Will did not know the voice ; the tone turned him blind and dizzy.

Winifred started violently, and turned ; she clasped her hands tightly, and lifted them to her breast in a frightened way, as she fell back a step.

"Oh, my God !" she cried, under her breath. There was a rattle of the gate-latch, a sharp flying open of the gate, and the stranger held her in his arms.

"My darling, my darling !" he said, with an infinite tenderness. "Did you think you could hide anywhere in all this wide world where I should not find you ?"

For just an instant she yielded to his clasp—then she drew back. "You must not," she said, softly, with unmistakable pain in her voice. "You know that. I thought if I was utterly out of sight or hearing, you would forget me, and *I* might—forget myself."

He broke in before she had fairly spoken. "You were mistaken, Winifred ; there was no one between us. O my foolish little hot-head ! if you had not been so headlong in your self-sacrifice—if you had only waited till I came back—I could have showed you in ten minutes that there was no place for it. Mollie is married to John Gates and is very happy. And you and I—my little girl, how nearly our two lives have been spoiled ! Sweetheart," he said, laughing with a shaky voice, "I think I shall never dare let go of you again"—and he drew her back to him.

She hesitated—surrendered—clung to him with a long sobbing breath. "Oh, I have wanted you so, I have *wanted* you so !" she cried. "Oh, don't be a dream and melt away this time !"

Will Strong, standing close in the darkness of the oleander, acquiring a life-long association with smell of Madeira vine and oleander and wet earth, cry of crickets and noise of sprinkling water, gathered himself together enough to creep away. He was *going* to realize it pretty soon, he thought ; he did not yet ; it seemed likely to be beyond endurance when he did. As he passed the door some one opened it, and the lamp-light streamed about him ; Winifred looked around and saw his face for an instant, and then he had slipped away through a side gate.

He walked out from town across miles of dark plain, until he came to the empty channel of the stream by which they had sat in March. Under-

foot not a blade of grass or green thing ; no stranger would have believed that living thing had ever grown there. The flocks and herds had long since gone to the mountain pastures. The dry channel between shelvy banks of gravel showed white in the unclouded yet dull starlight. The air was lifeless, and faintly tainted with smoke from forest fires in the mountains.

Will threw himself down on his face, clutching with his fingers at the gritty dirt. He knew as surely then, looking forward to his life, as he will know at the end looking back, that this would never be an out-lived romance. Nor could he creep back into that temple of dreams from which Winifred's own hand had lured him—it had crumbled to dust behind him. Nor was he like one who, losing a woman, loses only his best pleasure and best ambition ; she was the vital condition to every pleasure, every ambition ; losing her, he lost all. The realization clutched him by this time like a tiger. There was not a living creature within miles ; a man might go down to primal depths, might drop even the restraint of the human in outcries and struggles as free as a tortured beast's. It may be that solitude sees more such scenes than a decently decorous world would like to think.

Yet there was a sense upon him of some moral demand, some decision to be made ; and in time he began to try to collect himself for it. It would seem as if there could hardly be a position that

left less for him to decide. There was no question of renouncing—he had never had anything to renounce. Nevertheless, his instinct was correct in urging him to a moral conflict and a momentous decision. The question was simply whether he could pick up his life again, could find faith that anything was worth living for ; or whether life was to be a hollow going through the forms—frustrated, purposeless, full of brooding regret and jealousy, shame, and sense of wrong. But he could not drag his bruised mind up to the question ; he could not even think what it was. He lifted himself up, stepped down into the dry channel, and knelt on the white stones, obeying old association with the attitude ; laid his arms and head on a shelf of the bank, and let the stunned and nerveless will lie passive, while the accumulated forces of years—of generations—passion and pain and despair and love, shame and bitterness and loyalty—trampled back and forth over him, fighting out for him his battle.

It was deathly, aggressively still ; not an insect to chirp, not a tree to rustle ; only bare earth and sodden air. After a long time Will raised his head and threw it back, looking up at the dull stars, while his outstretched hands lay clasped before him ; he began to breathe more deeply. Not many minutes later he rose and walked homeward across the dim, wide waste.

It was afternoon of the next day when he stood at Mrs. Stutt's door again. Mrs. Stutt looked at

him with the embarrassment of conscious pity as she admitted him. People had been looking at him all day, on the street and in the office, with the same embarrassment and pity. Miss Northrop was packing, the good woman said ; and, in an answer to her call, Winifred came out from her room into the little sitting-room. She, too, was evidently under agitation and embarrassment. Will had no doubt, from his first sight of her face, that she had seen and understood his haggard flight the evening before. He was himself entirely calm, as he held out his hand with a grave smile in silence.

Winifred tried to speak naturally.

"I had just sent a note to you, Will," she said, as they sat down.

"About the school, I suppose," he answered, quietly. "You are going away at once?"

"Yes." There she stopped, with her eyes downcast. She looked up to his face and caught her breath to speak, stopped, and began again.

"You have been very good to me all this year—" there she hesitated. Her difficulty was to choose her words so as to ignore his secret, and yet not part from him in a cold or inadequate way.

He rose, and crossed over to her.

"Winifred," he said gently, "you are distressed on my account ; and so it is better that I should speak of what otherwise it would be better to ignore. I want you to know that you have not harmed me."

She rose quickly at that, and they stood near together, with their eyes fixed on each other's ; the fulness of expression in her face seemed to take the place of answer. He went on steadily, speaking low :

" I have thought it all over, and I find these two things stronger than any pain that may have come to me. Winifred, I cannot do you this wrong, to make you the instrument of evil to me. That is one of the two things. And the other is that there is nothing to reproach any one with ; no one has done wrong ; there is no cause for shame, or resentment, or bitterness—only for clean pain. Pain is no great evil, Winifred, when it is clean, no matter how sharp."

He smiled at her tranquilly enough as he spoke. In truth, he was not unhappy at the moment. It is not during but after the parting interview that the pinch comes. She answered him only with her deeply attentive look, and he went on :

" I did not come to those convictions ; they came to me ; or rather, they were in me, and bore down all the other feelings. All the noisy passions dropped away before them, and left just those clear voices in my soul. They made all my love and loyalty work together, instead of tearing me in opposite directions. For, see, Winifred, hasn't it been our moral faith for years that to do spiritual harm to another is the greatest evil that can befall one, and to do him spiritual benefit, the greatest good ? All these years since we were in school

together, I have been proud to think that it could be only a good to you to have me think of you as I have thought, because it was only a good to me. And I will not be so disloyal now as to let my life be spoiled because of you."

Winifred looked at him aghast. "All these years!" It was a revelation intolerable at first shock to a woman that was no coquette.

"I think it was all the time dimly in my mind what *your* last year had been; at last I went out of my life and into yours. I want you to understand that I do not think of it with bitterness, because I entered so little into it; I realize, Winifred"—his voice broke from its steadiness—"that you have been good, *good* in it all. If you had not been—if you had trifled with me—I think I should be at the bottom of the river to-day. But since no one has wronged me," he went on more quietly, "since nothing monstrous or unnatural has befallen me, everything I believed in has the same claim on me as ever.

"And I want you to know that you need not *mind* my love, Winifred." She dropped her eyes and stood mute. "It is something you may be willing and glad to have without troubling yourself because you cannot return it. For any pain that has happened, do not trouble yourself about that either—if I don't mind it, you needn't," he said, smiling a little, with a certain manly sweetness quite new to him. "I find one gains some-

thing in having no longer to struggle with pain and try to keep her at arm's length."

She looked up then, and cried out passionately. "O Will, Will, if only there was anything in all this world I could do to make it up to you!"

"There is nothing to make up," he said. "I would rather have pain from you than pleasure from any one else. But there *is* something that you can do; this: not to feel my love a burden laid upon you, an annoyance or trespass, an anxiety or self-reproach—or anything that will make you want to get rid of it," he finished, smiling again; "and to let me give you all I wish, on the condition that I ask no return. And if, in a few years, I should ask to come and live near you, and be good friends—may I? It would be hard," he urged, less quietly, "that I should have to lose your friendship, when I ask nothing more. Would you take away the crumbs from me, just because I have lost the loaf?"

"Is that best, Will?" she began, anxious and hesitating. "Oh, I mean for you. It isn't *possible* that you can always—think of me—so. There is no reason. If you do not see me—somebody else—"

"Have I been seeing you these dozen years?" he said, very gently. "You may trust me to know what is best for me. Why think—think a moment, dear friend, and you will understand. You, of all people, *can* understand the plane I want you to take me on."

Winifred's eyes kindled and her face flushed. "I see. I *do* understand. I can meet you on your own plane, and I can trust your friendship and you. I am not afraid to have you come—after a year or two."

"Thank you," he said, shaken as he had not been.

"It is because you are very noble that any good can come out of this harm," she went on, with an eloquent tremor in her voice. "I can see that before very long I shall be, as you said, willing—glad—for so great a gift—only always sorry for your sake. I am very grateful *now*—I cannot tell you how great a thing I think it is—from such a man as you."

They had both become embarrassed and shy now, and both stood silent to recover their ease. "You leave by this evening's train?" he asked in a minute.

"Yes."

"Then this is good-by."

"For a while."

They moved together to the door. As they reached it, Will turned and held out his hand, with an attempt at a smile. They stood a few moments with hands clasped. Winifred's downcast eyes were filling.

"Good-by, Winifred," he said.

"Good-by," she answered, faintly. A minute later she had thrown herself sobbing on her bed, and he was walking down the street.

He met Winifred's lover, coming from the ticket-office—a gentleman high-bred and handsome in every line, a scholar by his appearance, a good man by his eyes, a good companion by his smile. There were all those differences between him and Will that the young man had talked of and Winifred in all sincerity had called nothing ; and, moreover, she would never in the world have loved him if there had not been. The girl was an aristocrat after all, when it came to a question not of friendship but love. And Will knew it ; love is penetrating enough to divine that much from scanty data. He looked at the stranger with a sort of transferred reverence—what a king of men must he be whom Winifred could crown ! And if he did not look at him without a blinding pang, it was, nevertheless, a test of the thoroughness of the night's work that there was neither bitterness nor aversion in it. Something, that sense of having disarmed pain—not dodged nor outwitted it, but disarmed it forever—must have been in Winkelried's consciousness as the spears pressed in.

But, after all, it is *taking* the second place that costs—not being there after it has been once sincerely and thoroughly accepted. Bunyan knew long ago that it was easy walking in the Valley of Humiliation, once you had come safely down.

On the street an acquaintance met Strong and turned to walk beside him. It was the man who would not trust Judge Garvey out of sight with his baby's silver mug.

"I was just going to your office," he said. "It's something very important." He spoke with a marked friendliness, and a transparently covert sympathy. "You see," he went on, confidentially, "we fellows that have been against Garvey begin to think our minority's about over. The whole affair of Miss Northrop has hurt him. He was shabby when first she came, about that Coakley business, and he's been ugly about her ever since in a sneaking sort of way. Such a lady, too! And there's a thing come out to-day—if you'll excuse my speaking of it." He showed a certain embarrassment. "Uncle Billy Green gave it away first—he knew, being postmaster—but Garvey's been boasting of it himself, too, in the bar-room. You know you used to write to a fellow in the States, and haven't written to him so much lately."

"Yes, I know," said Strong. The man caught a hint of what he did not say in what he did.

"Uncle Billy gives away any interesting point he gets in the post-office," he said, apologetically. "You knew that before, Strong. Well, Garvey got out of him, too, that Miss Northrop didn't have nor write any letters; and he got it into his head she was hiding. Anybody could see she wasn't used to working for a living—"

"Look here—"

"Bless you, Strong, I sha'n't say a word disrespectful to her. This is something you'd ought to know. He just did up a '*Clarion*' with some

notice about the school in it, and her name marked, and sent it to that fellow you used to write to ; and he wrote on the margin : ' Please forward to Miss N.'s friends.' He said in the bar-room, to-day, that he didn't know just what would come of it, but it stood to reason if she was on the hide, it would damage her or you, somehow."

" It hasn't, however," said Strong. " But if *I* stayed round the bar-room—"

" Oh, we choked him off. I tell you, Strong, everybody thinks it was a pretty dirty trick. The people don't care so much about his big tricks, but they won't stand any such small ones. No money in it, either—only spite ! Well, the long and the short is—it's only a few weeks till convention ; and if you'll take hold now while they're mad, you can name your own man for Senate, and we'll send you to Assembly."

" I don't want to go to Assembly," said Will, standing on his office-step. " I'll gladly do my best to defeat Garvey for Senate."

" Well, you just decide on your man, and bring him out in your next paper and we'll elect him. The people are strong for you just now. And I should think you would look on going to Assembly as a sort of duty—purify politics, you know."

" Well—I'll think about it." And young Strong walked into his shabby office, stopped to give Jim directions, then went in behind his screen, and sat down to write a proper editorial for beginning the reform campaign.

HOW OLD WIGGINS WORE SHIP.

AN OLD SAILOR'S YARN.

BY CAPTAIN ROLAND T. COFFIN.

“WELL, sir,” said the old sailor, “here we are ag’in. I ain’t been round here much lately, and atwixt you and me, she’s put the ‘kybosh’ onto it, holdin’ that comin’ round here and hystin’ are promotin’ of rheumatics, which, as are well known, they come of long and various exposures in all climates, to say nothin’ of watchin’ onto a damp dock night arter night continual. But what’s the use? Everybody knows as a quiet home are better than silver and fine gold, which it stands to reason are to be obtained in two ways. Wimmin are like sailors in some respects; whoever has anythin’ to do with ’em must either be saddled and bridled, leastwise, or else booted and spurred. You’ve got to ride ’em, or else they’ll ride

you. Bein' a sailorman myself, it ain't likely as I'd say anythin' ag'in 'em ; but if the truth must be told, I'll say this—that while it'll never do, not at no price, for to let sailors git the upper hand, there's many a man as has giv' the helm into the hands of his old woman and made a better v'yage thereby ; and I don't mind sayin', sir, that havin' while follerin' the water got into the habit of allowin' her for to be skipper in the house durin' my short stoppin's on shore, it got for to be so much the custom, that since comin' home for a full due I ain't never tried for to break away from it ; and though human natur' is falliable, and she does make mistakes, especially about the hystin', on the whole, and by and large, I judges I've been a gainer by it, as I believes at least eight men out of ten would be if they took the hint accordin' and went and done likewise.

“ I don't go for to say as she ever goes to go to say I ain't a-goin' for to let you go there ; but it are terrible aggrivokin' when the rheumatics twinges awful, and as it might be that this saw-mill don't want no more splinters laid onto it, to have her feelin'ly remark, ' Well, if you will go round a-guzzlin' ale with your swell friends and a-leavin' your lawful wife to home alone you must expect to pay for it,' whereas I know it are the dock and other causes long gone by ; but that knowledge don't ease the pain a morsel, and the last time I were that way tantalized I swore I wouldn't come here no more. But what-

ever are the use? Man resolves and reresolves and then takes another snifter, and so here I are, and bein' as its cold, as so she sha'n't have no basis for her unfeelin' remark about guzzlin' ale, we'll let him make it hot rum, and arter the old receipt, neither economizin' in the rum or the sugar, but givin' a fair drink for honest money.

“ Well, well (just mix another afore the glass cools off), to think how the time goes. Here it are autumn ag'in, and in a few weeks 'twill be winter. It reminds me (I'll take one more, if you please, with one lump less of sugar and the space in rum) that I'm gittin' old, and I feels it. My eyes ain't so good and my legs ain't so good, and I ain't so good all over. When I goes down to the dock my lantern are heavier than it used to were, and the distance ain't so short as it used to seem from the dock to the house. Afore many years I'll be put quietly away, and though I'd prefer bein' beautifully sewed up and launched shipshape in blue water, with a hundred pound weight for to keep me down, I s'poses it won't make much difference, nohow. Anyhow, if I lives as long as old Wiggins, I hopes I may go as well at the eend. I don't think I ever told you about him, and if you'll let him fill 'em up ag'in—for it's one of the vartues of hot rum that the more you drinks the thirstier you gits—I'll reel you the yarn right off.

“ Old Wiggins had been all his life into the Liverpool trade and had got well fixed, so far as cash were consarned ; and so when he came for to

be seventy or seventy-two years old he were persuaded for to knock off for a full due and spend the balance of his life ashore. Goin' up to some place in Connecticut, he buys hisself a place there and settles down. Well, for a time he were all right, a-fixin' up his house, a-buildin' new barns and hen-coops and fences and the like, and I've heerd tell that the house where he kep' his pigs were better than any dwellin'-house in that region, and the whole place were the wonder of the country roundabout ; but arter he had fixed his house all up like a ship, with little staterooms all through the upper part of it, and had got everythin' inside and out in shipshape order, and there weren't nothin' else he could think of for to do, he gits terribly homesick and discontented, and times when he'd come to the city for to collect his sheer of the profits of ships as he had a interest in, he'd sit for hours on the wharf a-watchin' the vessels on the river, and it were like drawin' teeth for to git him to leave and go up to his home. His eyes had giv' out sometime afore he quit the sea, and his legs was shaky, so as he had to walk with a settin' pole, and his hand were tremblin' and unsteady ; but aloft he were still all right, and his head were as clear as a bell.

“ Arter bein' ashore a matter of seven year, he comes to town one day to see a ship off what he had been in afore he quit, and in which he had a half interest. The skipper of that ship, which her name were the Vesuvius, he bein' called Perkins,

in comin' from the Custom House arter clearin', got athwart-hawse of a dray and were knocked down, the wheels passin' over his legs and breakin' of 'em, and whatever do old Wiggins do—the home-sickness bein' strong onto him—but says to the agents, 'It are a pity for to lose a day's fair wind ; I'll go aboard and take her out myself ;' and, sure enough, he done it, never lettin' on to the folks at home, but leavin' the agents to tell 'em arter he were gone.

"Into that ship I were shipped, she bein' 830 tons or thereabout, with three royal yards across, and loaded with flour and grain, there bein' sixteen of us afore the mast, with two mates, carpenter and cook, and steward, leavin' on the 16th of November, and, unless I'm mistakened, in the year 1843.

"We towed down to the Hook and out over the bar, and then put the muslin on to her with a fine breeze from sou'west, and I supposes there weren't a happier man in the world than old Wiggins when he discharged the pilot and steamer and took charge.

" 'I've giv' 'em the slip,' says he to the mate. 'I've giv' 'em the slip ; they thought I were too old for to go to sea, but I'll show 'em thar's plenty of life into me yet ; git out all the starboard stunsails and see to it that she's kep' a-movin' night and day, for in sixteen days I expects to walk the pierhead in Liverpool.' Well, sure enough, a-movin' she were kep', and I never seen harder

carryin's on than I seen that passage ; but we never lost a stitch of canvas, 'cause the old man not only knowed how to carry it, but he knowed how to take it off of her when it be to come off, and in a gale of wind he'd 'liven up wonderful, whereas in light weather he'd show his age. It were funny for to see him takin' the sun and tryin' to read her off, which he weren't able for to do, not by no means.

“ ‘ What d'ye stand on ? ’ he'd say to the mate arter screwin' his eye to the glass and tryin' to make it out ; and when the mate would tell him, he'd say, ‘ I believe that agrees with me ; just take a squint at my instrument ; my eyesight ain't just as good as it used for to be, and I don't quite make it out. ’ Then the mate would read him off his instrument, and arter he'd made it eight bells he'd go down and work it up and prick her off. The fourteenth day out we made the light on Fast-net Rock, off Cape Clear, and went bowlin' along the coast, passin' Tuskar next day, and swingin' her off up channel and round Hollyhead past the Skerries and takin' a pilot off P'int Lynas. It were a sight worth seein' for to watch the old man handle her in takin' a pilot. The wind were fresh from west-norwest, and we passed the Skerries with all three royals set and lower topmast and to'gallan' stunsails on the port side. As soon as ever we passed the rocks we kep' off for Lynas, and as soon as the stunsails got by the lee they was hauled in. Then with the wind about two p'int on the star-

board quarter we went bilin' along for the boat which we seen standin' off shore just to the east'ard of the P'int. There were a pretty bubble of a sea on, and afore we gits to him he goes about standin' in to the bay and givin' sheet. We follers along arter him, goin' two feet to his one, still car-ryin' all three royals, with hands at halliards and clewlines. Just afore we gits to him the old man sings out, 'Clew up the royals, haul down the flyin' jib, haul up the crochick and mainsail.' By this time we was well under the land and in smooth water. Keepin' his eye onto the pilot-boat, which were a couple of p'int's onto our weather bow, the old man no sooner seen her come to than he sings out, 'Hard up the helm!' And as we swung off afore the wind we runned up the foresail and laid the head-yards square; then mannin' the port main braces we let the to'gallan' yards run down on the caps and let her come to ag'in, and so nicely had the old man calculated the distance that as she come to the wind she shot up alongside of the pilot-boat, stoppin' just abreast of her and not over twenty foot away.

" 'That was well done, Mr. Mate,' said the pilot, as he come over the side; 'some of these galoots makes us chase 'em half a day afore we can board 'em. Fill away the head-yards, put your helm up, run up the flyin' jib, brail up the spanker check in the arter yards,' and as she swung off he comes aft to the wheel where I was a-steerin', and says, 'Keep her east-sou'east, my man; giv' us a chew of ter-

backer.' We soon had the muslin piled onto her ag'in, and sure enough, as old Wiggins had said, the sixteenth day out he walked the pierhead in Liverpool.

"I understood as old Wiggins was made a good deal on in Liverpool as bein' the oldest skipper that had ever come there, and the Board of Trade and what not giv' him dinners, and so on—which, considerin' his age, he oughtn't to have took—and by other skippers at the hotel he were much honored, bein' giv' the head of the table and treated with great deference—and all this dinin' and winin' and feastin' weren't no good to him—and, arter a stay of three weeks, when we ag'in went down the river with full complement of passengers and a good freight, he weren't not by no means as well as when we went in. We had, too, a tough time down channel, a stiff sou'wester, with rain and thick weather, and it told onto the old man, so that when arter bein' out a week we at last got clear of Tuskar and had the ocean open, the relief from the strain fetched him, and he were took down sick.

"Whether it were to punish him for comin' to sea at his time of life or not I don't know; but from this on we did have the devil's own weather. Gale after gale from the west'ard, shiftin' constant from sou'west to nor'west, and tryin' constant to see from which quarter it could blow the hardest.

"The mate were a plucky and a able young feller, by the name of Graham, and he kep' her a-

dancin' as well as the old man would have done. Constant she had everythin' put to her that she'd bear, and always were she kep' on the tack where she'd make the most westin', and so she struggled along till we was as far as thirty degrees west, we bein' thirty days out and not yet half way. Every day we asked the steward how old Wiggins were a-gittin' on, and every day he'd shake his head and say 'no better;' and it come to be understood, fore and aft, that it were as much as a toss-up if the old man ever smelled grass ag'in. We had a little let-up arter gittin' into the thirties, and for a day or so had fine weather and a chance to dry our dunnage. Fine days, however, is scarce in January on that herrin' pond—I'll take just another; mentionin' herrin's makes me dry—and when you gits 'em they are most always weather-breeders. I went up on to the main royal yard when our side come up at 8 o'clock one mornin' for to sew on the leather on the parral, and it were like a day in May. Afore I got the leather sewed on I be to look out for myself, 'cause they was goin' to clew up the sail, and from that time on it breezed on from the sou'ard, keepin' us constantly takin' the sail off of her, till at four bells we was under double-reefed topsails and reefed courses, with jib, crochick, and spanker stowed. We hammered away under this, carryin' on very heavy, 'cause she were headin' west-nor'west, which were a good course, till eight bells in the arternoon watch, when the sea gittin' up so

tremendiously we had to furl the reefed main-sail and mizzen topsail and close reef the fore and main topsails.

“ You’d think that were snug enough for any ship, now, wouldn’t you? and sartin it are; no ship ever ought to have less canvas than this, till it blows away, ’cause she’s safer with it onto her than with it off, the reefed foresail supportin’ the yard. Well, we’d had gales and gales, but this here gale beat anythin’ that I’d ever seen, and at seven bells in the first night watch, with a tremendous surge, the weather leech rope of the fore-sail giv’ way, and in a jiffy away went the foreyard in the slings—the foresail and fore-topsail goin’ into ribbons. All hands, of course, was busy for’ard, tryin’ for to git some of this wreck stuff tranquillized, when all of a suddint from the poop come the old man’s voice, full and round and clear, and not shrill and pipin’ as we’d heerd it last, and above all the roarin’ of the gale and the din of the slattin’ canvas, we heerd him shout: ‘ Stations for wearin’ ship. We must git her head round to the sou’ard,’ he bawled in the ear of the mate, as Mr. Graham struggled aft; ‘ the shift will come in less than half a hour, and its goin’ to be tremendous; if it catches us aback it won’t leave a stick into her; but it ain’t a-goin’ to catch us, sir; I’ve brung her through many and many a time like this. I’ll bring her through this one, and then you must do the rest. Now, then,’ says he, ‘ stand by, put your helm just a few spokes a-weather,

don't check her at all with the rudder, slack a foot or two of the lee braces and check in to wind'ard ; keep your eye constant on that sail, Mr. Clark '— that were the second mate—' and don't let it shake ; keep it good full and give her away ; lay the crochick yard square, and come up to the main-braces, all of you.' And so, gently, as if she'd been a sick child, he coaxed her to go off, and she begin to gather way. As soon as she done so the helm were put hard up, and the main-yard rounded in, just keepin' the topsail alift, but not permittin' it to shake. As she went off till she got the sea on the quarter, a mighty wave came a-rollin' along, boardin' us about the main riggin', floodin' the decks and dashin' out the starboard bulwarks. The minnit we got the wind onto the starboard quarter we braced the mainyard sharp up with the port-braces and bowsed the weather ones as taut as a harp string. 'Now, then,' says the old man, 'never mind that trash for'ard, let that go ; git a jumper on to the main-yard and a preventer main-topsail brace aloft ; lay aloft for your lives, and clap preventer gaskets on everythin' that's furled ; we'll have it soon from the north'ard fit to take the masts out of her.' He were right. In a short time there were a instant's lull, and then with a roar that were almost deafenin' came the cyclone from the north. Thanks to the old man's sagacity and experience, however, we was a-headin' sou'-southeast when it hit us, and it struck us right aft.

“ ‘ Steady as you go,’ shouts the old man, and

then, a minnit arter, as she gathered way, he says ag'in to the mate, ' We must let her come to, Mr. Graham, we can't run her in the teeth of the old s'utherly sea ; ease down the helm and let her smell of it.' It was a powerful whiff she took, for as she come to and felt the force of the wind, all three to'gallan' masts went short off at the cap, the main-topsail sheets parted, and in an instant there wasn't a piece of the sail left big enough for a lady's handkerchief.

" ' That's all it can do,' said the old man to the mate, bitterly ; ' git this trash on deck as soon as possible, and git her a-waggin' once more ; I've brung her through it safe, and am goin' home,' and with that he dropped onto the poop as dead as mutton. He had come on deck bare-headed and with nothin' on but his drawers and shirt, just as he had laid in his bunk for a fortnight, and the exposure had carried him off. However, he knowed that the shift were so near nobody ever could tell. There were no doubt, however, but that his gittin' her weared round were our salvation. If that gust had a-struck us aback our masts would have gone sartin, and it's a toss-up but what we'd a-gone down starn fust afore she'd a-backed round. Next day we giv' old Wiggins a funeral fit for the Emperor of Rooshy, and he well desarved it. I don't know as ever I seen a prettier sew-up than we done on him, wrappin' him first in the American ensign and then kiverin' him with brand-new No 4 canvas. Considerin' the sails we'd lost and how

much we needed the canvas, I think he must have been satisfied that we done the handsome thing by him. The day was beautiful and clear, although the wind still blowed a gale. We hadn't been able to do much with the wreck stuff, except git lashin's onto it for to keep it from swingin' about, and we hadn't dared for to try for to send up another maintopsail. We had set the reefed mainsail for to steady her, and that were all. The three to'gallan' masts was still a-hangin' over the side, and the ribbons of the foresail and fore topsail was still a-flutterin' in the breeze, when at eight bells, at midday, all hands was called for to bury the dead. Everythin' that we had in the way of nice clothes we had put on for to do honor to our captain, and most of us was able to sport white shirts and broadcloth. We laid the old man onto a plank and kivered him with the union jack, and all hands gathered round him, while Mr. Graham read the sarvice. Everythin' went lovely, and just at the proper time we tilted the plank, and he slipped off without a hitch of any kind. Arter the mate finished the readin', he said, 'Men, there's a good man gone arter a long life of great usefulness. He were a sailor and a gentleman. I don't think as we ought for to cry over sich a man, and I propose we giv' him three cheers and God bless him'; and heartier cheers was never giv' than we giv' that day, arter which all hands got dinner.'

“— MAS HAS COME.”

BY LEONARD KIP.

IT was called Beacon Ledge fully fifty years before the present lighthouse had been built upon it. For it was said that long ago, when wrecking was a profitable trade along the coast, and goodly vessels were frequently, by false lights, decoyed to their destruction, there was no more favorable point for the exercise of that systematic villainy than this rocky, high-lifted bluff. Projecting three or four hundred feet into the sea, with a gradually curved, sweeping line, it formed, to be sure, upon the one side, a limited anchorage—safe enough for those who knew it; but, upon the other side, it looked upon a waste of shoal, dotted, here and there, at lowest tide, with craggy breakers, and, at high water, smooth, smiling, and deceitful, with the covered dangers. Here, then, upon certain dark and stormy nights, the flaming beacon of destruc-

tion would glow brightly against the black sky, and wildly lighten up the cruel faces of those who stood by and piled on the fagots, while gazing eagerly out to sea to mark the effect of their evil machinations. Nor was it until some thirty years ago that the gangs of wretches were thoroughly broken up, and this, their favorite vantage-ground, wrested from them, and the tall, white lighthouse there securely founded—maintaining in mercy what had before been held as a blighting curse; lifting itself, like a nation's warning finger, and with its calm, serene glow, pointing out the path of safety. Then, in the mouths of all the surrounding inhabitants, Beacon Ledge became known as Beacon Ledge Beacon, and so kept its name, in spite of tautological criticism, or of different and more formal christening, by Government authority.

Still, there hung around the place the memories or traditions of past violence, shipwreck, and murder—partly true, perhaps, but, doubtless, generally false, having only a few grains of fact or probability mingled with all kinds of distorted fictions—the deeds of pirates being supplemented to those of mere wreckers; the imaginations of fishermen along the coast ever inventing plenteous horrors, and wild tales of buccaneering rovers, originally written for other localities, being now wilfully adopted and here located, until, at last, there was hardly a known crime which could not find its origin or counterpart at Beacon Ledge, and the whole neighboring shore became a melancholy storehouse of

terrors, disaster, and distress. These tales being discovered to be very pleasing to most strangers, were carefully cultivated and enlarged upon by each interested denizen of the place ; and to me, also, for awhile, they had a peculiar charm. I seldom grew tired of hearing some grizzled, tar-incrusted fisherman reel off his tissue of improbable abominations. For awhile, I say, since there came, at last, a day when I cared no longer for such bloody traditions, forgot the shadowy horrors that flitted about the spot, and only thought and cared for it as the place where I had met and loved dear little Jessie Barkstead.

She was the only child of the lighthouse keeper. In a worldly point of view, therefore, was it wisely done that I should have set my affections upon her? Possibly not ; and it is likely that, had I known the weakness of my mind, I would have shunned the danger from the very first. But I was gay and reckless in my poor self-complacency and deceitful assurance of inner strength ; and long before I had fairly realized how rapidly I was drifting, I found myself whirling down the swift current, and was lost. Nor was it a marvel that this should have so happened. To one who sits aloof in his unromantic, distant home, it is an easy thing, indeed, to moralize about matters of inferior station and *mésalliance* ; but I believe that few could have seen little Jessie, as she first appeared to me, and not have felt some secret inclination to give way before those subtile charms of beauty and man-

ner which invested her. Moreover, let it here be mentioned that she was not at all of humble birth or education. Old Barkstead was himself a gentleman by culture and station, and had once been the master of a gallant ship. In that important position he had been for many years a pleasant and popular officer; but at length, in an evil day, through some temporary weakness or neglect, he had lost his charge, and almost ruined his employers. The world—with what degree of truth cannot now be told—had charged the loss upon intoxication. A storm of obloquy and reproach arose. The man, bowed down with self-abasement and sensitiveness, had yielded to the blast, and attempted no defence; and, after awhile, obtaining, through some friendly influence, the custody of the Beacon Light, he had fled, with his child, to that obscurity, leaving no trace behind him, and caring only to pass the rest of his life in the quiet of the world's forgetfulness.

I was myself the occasional tenant of a lighthouse, for, during a few weeks of the summer, I had been visiting the Penguin Light, some four or five miles distant up the coast. It was a tall and far-reaching structure, standing upon a jutting point of rock—almost the duplicate of the Beacon Ledge; the two lights glimmering at each other across the little bay between, and only to be distinguished apart at night by the different periods of their revolutions. Penguin Light was in the keeping of old Barry Somers, a long-known and valued sailor-friend of mine, who, in past days, had taught me to swim,

and sail a boat, and now seemed to regard his office more for the opportunity it gave of entertaining me than for its actual salaried value. Thither, therefore, I would often repair during the summer months, avoiding the usual crowded haunts, and giving preference to old Barry's pleasant talk and my solitary rambles along the shore; occasionally running out to sea, that I might speak friendly pilots cruising in the distance; and now and then, by way of change and innocent attempt at usefulness, taking my turn at keeping up and watching over the safety of the lantern-lamps.

It was during one of my lonely wanderings along the beach, when, with gun in hand, I made feeble and unsuccessful attempts against the lives of the merry little sand-pipers, that I first saw Jessie. She sat upon a rock, and was gazing out at sea. In her hand was a book, which she was not reading—who, indeed, could read collectedly, with that fresh breeze lifting such a pleasant array of dancing white-caps, and rolling inward those strong bodies of surf, which broke upon the shore with the ring of sportive Titans? Her handkerchief had fallen off her head, and her curls were flying wantonly in the breeze. I did not, for the moment, dream that she had any connection with the lighthouse, but rather that she was a chance city visitor at some inland country-house; and so I passed on, not venturing to speak with her. So, also, the next day, and the next—finding her always there when I passed, as though that particular hollow in the rock was her

own especial, allotted refuge-place. At last, gaining courage from those frequent meetings, and, perhaps, from the half smile with which she began to greet my coming, I addressed her ; and so the few words of salutation gradually lengthened into conversation, and, before we were well conscious of the fact, had ripened into terms of intimacy.

How swiftly such matters sometimes proceed, when removed from the stiffness and ceremony of city life ! A week only had passed, and I began to find that all my walks led in that one direction. Jessie was always at her place, with the uncompleted book in her hands ; and I, going no farther, would seat myself beside her, throw down my useless gun, let the poor sand-pipers go undismayed, and so prepare for the comfortable, pleasant conversation of the morning. It was no unattractive pastime, indeed, to dispose the dry sea-weed for her seat ; and then, placing my head upon another pile, remain half reclined at her feet, listening to her lively talk, and pretending to look out upon the blue waves, when, all the while, I was stealthily gazing into the deeper blue of her eyes. Nor, when I heard her story—or, so much of it as at first she deigned to tell me—did I hold her in less respect. The daughter of the lighthouse, indeed ! Why, truly, this should matter nothing at all to me. What interest could I have in her past or present associations, or how could they, in any way, detract from her own native grace and loveliness ? Were her eyes less bright, or was her conversation less

cheery, or were her attitudes less picturesque and pleasing, because old Captain Barkstead, instead of still sailing a fleet merchantman, now mopingly cleaned his reflectors, and, when strangers came, hid himself in the lantern? Moreover, had she not brought with her from her former home, wherever that might be, a wit, and intellect, and intelligence which might adorn any position? What more could be needful in promotion of a quiet seaside flirtation? In a week or ten days I should go away, and no longer see her. I should carry off with me the memories of a very pleasant face, that had always brightened up whenever I came near; and then, as, after awhile, new forms and scenes came between, I would, of course, forget her. For a time, she might possibly look out longingly after my return, and, finding that I did not come back, might—well, not exactly lose memory of me, I hoped. It was to be desired, perhaps, that a few thoughts of me would always tinge her future life, I argued with something of man's selfishness. I would not, indeed, that she should make herself miserable about me; but if, when her face had faded from my thoughts, some little record of myself should pleasantly remain with her, and now and then bring a transitory pang of musing regret, who should say nay?

Therefore, in time, I went away. I did not steal off without farewell. That would have been but sorry recompense for the many cheery hours she had given me. But, taking her hand in mine,

I gave to her my heartfelt thanks for all the pleasant past, and my cordial wishes for the future. I did not know that I should ever meet her again, I said. I hoped, however, that she would not too soon forget me. It was in my heart to utter more tender and sentimental words than I had any right to use, but I repressed the inclination. I cherished, too a secret hope that she would show some sorrow for my departure ; but, if she felt any at all, she did not allow her expression, or her color, to betray her. With quiet self-possession, yet with a certain interest, too—as when one gives up a pleasant, valued friend—she bade me adieu ; and so, lifting from her feet the ever-harmless gun, I passed away, round the border of the little bay, and returned to the city.

There, however, somewhat to my surprise, I failed to forget her ; and wherever I went, the image of that light, graceful form, seated upon the rock, began to obtrude itself upon my thoughts. Of course, it was only a fleeting impression, I reasoned with myself, and would soon disappear again, as newer scenes and faces forced themselves upon me ; and I plunged rather more wildly than usual into society. But the proposed remedy did not have its due effect. In fact, it happened that the routine of gayety and formality seemed, by contrast, to aid the former impressions, making them seem more real and life-like than ever. It could not be that I was falling in love ! But yet I could not fail to confess a strange interest ; and, while

knowing that I was in danger, was content to let myself drift whither the current might carry me.

"I will see her once more. There was something I forgot to tell her when we parted last," I said to myself, trying in vain to establish and believe in a transparent self-deceit. "It was about a book, or something. It weighs upon my mind that she should deem me neglectful of her wishes. Once more, therefore, and then—"

"Where away, so late in the autumn?" inquired a friend, who saw me starting out.

"Down the bay, blue-fishing!" I exclaimed. "Just the real time for it."

"Ah? Well, good-by, then! Rather too cold sport for me, though!"

Therefore, I saw Jessie again—and yet again after that. Why should I not confess it?—or, after what I have already told, what is there left for me to confess, at all? For now, at last, I began to acknowledge to myself that it was not mere friendship or esteem I felt, but, rather, the more overpowering passion of real love. Gone, like a thin veil of vapor, were all my sophistries about a limited Platonic interest; my dread of incongruous association; my resolves against possible rashnesses; my fear of the world or its senseless gossip; my prudence, or my self-restraint! These all seemed to vanish in a day; and, yielding myself, slavishly, a willing captive to bright eyes and silvery tones, upon one fine morning I passed the Rubicon of safety, and offered her my hand

and heart. But, to my sore dismay, she only softly shook her head.

“ You do not love me, then ? ” I murmured. I spoke not merely with sorrow and disappointment, but with something of wounded pride — feeling mortified that she had not at once accepted my devotion. Certainly, it had seemed to me, all along, that I was not disagreeable to her ; and there was no doubt that in her manner, at least, she had always cordially welcomed my approach, and taken pleasure in my company.

“ I do not know—I hardly yet can tell ! ” she faintly said, drawing her hand from mine. “ To me, you are my best and dearest friend ; perhaps, the only one whom I can really call my friend. I know how glad I always feel when you come hither ; how lonely I am while you stay away. But this I do not think is love—the real, true love which I should wish to feel.”

“ But can it never be ? ” I pleaded.

“ How can I tell ? It might come to that, at last ; and yet— ” She ceased, and there came over her face a strange, dead look at the sea before her—a straining gaze, as though she would fix her eyes far beyond, in another hemisphere, oblivious of the present.

“ Yet tell me, Jessie, have I a rival ? This, at least, you might let me know. I will not go further, nor will I ask his name.”

For a moment she did not answer : still sitting, with that strange, rapt, straining gaze, and with

an unconscious, mechanical motion, rolling the little sand pebbles down the side of the rock.

"There was one," she said, at length. "I hardly know how to tell you about it. I believe that I cared for him, and yet I never told him so; nor did he ever tell me that he loved or cared for me, and yet, at the time, I thought that he did. It was some time ago—a very long time, it often seems to me; nor do I suppose that he and I will ever meet again. And now you know almost as much about it as I do myself," she continued, turning more fully toward me. "Or what more can I say? There was no pledge given on either side—no uttered words—and, of course, it has all gone by. But now and then, when I think about it, I feel regret; and it seems to me as though it were a different and stronger feeling than that which I have for you. Whether I am mistaken in my feelings, or how or what I really think, perhaps I cannot well tell; I am only a simple girl, after all, and know so very little about love, or what love truly is."

"Yet, Jessie dear," I pleaded, "if you look upon that old matter as buried and gone—which, doubtless, it must be—why think longer about it, instead of turning to the new and truer affection which now I offer you? Believe me, you are letting your mind dwell merely upon a dream of the past—one of those vain fancies of girlhood, which, though for the time they may control the mind, have no real, vital activity or force."

“ It may be so,” she said, in a sort of saddened, half-regretful tone. “ Indeed, it must be so ; and it might be that when the influence has passed away, I may find that I have cared for you better than I have imagined. I know that, even now, you seem dear to me as a friend, and that you are kind to me, making me always happy at your coming ; yet, at the same time, I think that there is something wanting in it all—something which is not love. You see that I am very plain with you. Better, then, to leave me ; is it not so ? For I cannot now give you my heart ; nor do I know whether, in the future, I can better do so ; and it is not right that I should keep you at my side, hoping or expecting what, after all, may never come.”

“ Nay, I will not leave you for all that, my Jessie,” I said, impulsively. “ I will still remain at your side, and trust even to the mere chance that, at some future period, you may relent.”

Therefore, dropping the subject for that time, I remained, and sought, by new kindnesses and attentions, to win some final increase of her favor toward me, but feeling, at the same time, a little sore and angry with myself. For, how wretchedly was I now maintaining that proper independence of spirit, which I had always insisted even the most blinded and devoted of lovers should feel ! Had it not been my cherished theory that no man should surrender his freedom of heart without obtaining in return the utmost, unlimited, and unselfish devotion ? Yet, here I was giving up my

whole soul to a blind passion, rendered more and more absorbing, doubtless, by the opposition I experienced, and for response I found myself willing to be content with even the cinders of a former and only half-dead affection ; trusting, as so many men have vainly trusted, that by earnest care and assiduity, I might, at last, re-illuminate the fading spark, and make its new brightness glow for me.

So passed the autumn, during which I made frequent journeys between coast and city ; striving, at times, with the cares of business to drive her image from my mind, and finding myself continually drawn back again to that quiet nook which, gifted with her presence, had become to me the brightest and only happy spot on earth. These frequent departures, so contrary to my usual habit, soon began to excite the inquiries and surmises of my friends. Fishing and shooting protracted into the season so far as almost to touch the edge of the winter, no longer served as satisfactory excuses for my absences ; and there were some among my friends, who, in their speculations, came very near the truth, and hinted suspicions of some rustic passion. But still, turning off their insinuations with a laugh, I kept my secret—holding it the more carefully and earnestly, as I now began to see hope dawning for me in the future.

For now, at last, it seemed as if I was about to prosper in my suit. Each time that I came, Jessie appeared yet more pleased to see me—more willing

to give me that attractive confidence which can only exist in full perfection between acknowledged lovers ; less disposed to analyze her mind's emotion with any critical severity, or speculate whether this or that feeling had, or had not, passed the line between friendship and love; more ready, at times, to surrender the struggle and self-examination, confess herself vanquished, and yield up her whole heart to my keeping. But not quite yet.

"A little longer," she pleaded. "Let me feel somewhat more sure of myself before—"

"And how much longer, then, Jessie?"

"Till Christmas, George. When Christmas comes, I will either be all your own, or will send you away forever. Will not that do?"

"It must, perforce, if I cannot gain better terms," I answered ; and I returned once more to my city life. It was my fixed intention to remain there resolutely until the Christmas morning itself had come ; but at last, unable to maintain the suspense, I stole back to the beach once more. It was now only two days from the time. The air was colder, of course, so that Jessie no longer took her place outside upon the rock ; but we could sit and talk in the shelter of the lighthouse door, undisturbed by old Barkstead, who usually fretted and moped out of sight, about half way up the shaft.

"Only two days more, dear Jessie," I said, "and then— Will it be well with me, do you think?"

" I think—I begin to think it will be well," she said, looking away.

" Then, if so you think, why should you longer delay your choice ?" I pleaded.

" Nay, George, it is only two days more. Let it, then, remain as first we said, and we shall be the better satisfied at having held out to the proper end."

Gaining nothing more from her, but feeling, in my own mind, well assured of ultimate success, I prepared to depart. Not to return to the city, indeed, for that would scarcely be worth while for such a little interval—but to the Penguin Light, where Barry Somers, as usual, had a place ready for me. But, as I was leaving, a sudden idea struck me—a wild, foolish fancy, it might be—yet, coming, as it did, with a certain investiture of originality, it fastened itself firmly and tenaciously upon me, and with animation I returned upon my steps.

" Listen, dear Jessie !" I said. " Until Christmas morning, therefore, I will not see you again, for I do not wish thus vainly to renew my pleadings, and it will be pleasanter to know that when I meet you once more, it will be with sweet confession on your lips, and the permission to look upon you thenceforward as my own. But still, while we are thus separated, can we not commune together ?"

" How, George ?"

" With the lights, dear Jessie. See here, now !

Mark how easily we can arrange our signalling, so that, across the intervening miles, we can flash our secret intelligence, and no one but ourselves be the wiser ! Look !—I will now write you out some signs, and with them, at night, we will hold our intercourse. This very evening I will control the lamps at Penguin Light, and you shall read what I will therewith tell you. To-morrow you will answer me from here ; and I, in turn, will decipher your sweet words. Will not that be a rare, as well as pleasant correspondence ?"

At the suggestion, her eyes brightened up with animated excitement, and at once she prepared to second my plan. How, indeed, could a young girl help approving of such a novel conception ? To talk with beacon-lights across five miles of foaming, heaving waters, when all around was dark and dreary !—to flash from one sympathetic heart to another the glowing signals of intelligence comprehended by no other persons ! — would not that be an achievement which would not only give pleasure in the actual present performance of it, but also in the recollection of it throughout future years ? So, sitting down again, she eagerly listened to me, while I, drawing a paper from my pocket, noted down the requisite tokens, something after the usual signs employed in ordinary telegraphy—short and simple—and left them in her possession. I saw at once that she comprehended the principle ; so, feeling no doubt that she would well perform

her part, I departed, reading, in her pleased consciousness of sharing that novel secret with me, such probable indications of affection, that, for the moment, I could scarcely resist once more throwing myself upon her pity, and asking instant assurance of my happiness.

But I forbore. Were I now to win her, in anticipation of that predetermined Christmas-day, might it not take something from the zest of the coming midnight correspondence?

So, controlling myself, I returned to Penguin Light. I had been a little troubled with the idea that, perhaps, I might not be able to manage the matter, after all; but, almost to my joy, I found old Barry complaining of his rheumatism, hobbling about, and looking wrathfully up the winding stairs, in surly deprecation of his approaching ascent. Upon which I seized the favorable opportunity, and, while relieving him, forwarded my own views.

"Let it alone for this night, Barry. Do you stay down here and make yourself comfortable, and I will keep watch in the lantern, and tend the lights."

"And can you keep awake, Georgy, my boy, do you think?"

"Of course I can, Barry."

Whereupon, for sole answer, Barry stumped away into the closet below—which he called his room—laid himself carefully away upon his old blankets, and I mounted to the lantern. There—

the hour of sundown having come—I lighted the lamps, and awaited my time. That was still some hours off ; I was to do nothing until midnight. Meanwhile, I laid myself down to take a nap. I had promised watchfulness, but it was hardly necessary in the beginning of the night. The wicks were then fresh, and it was not likely that any accident could happen. It was only toward the end of the night, when the wicks might become incrustrated or the reflectors dimmed, that especial care was needed.

I awoke again about midnight, the hour appointed for the commencement of my feat. The sky had clouded over, and not a star was to be seen. All the better, indeed, for the experiment ; for now there was no light to be seen in any direction, except where down the coast glimmered the Beacon Ledge Beacon—now faintly coming around the side, then glowing for a second like the mouth of a distant furnace, as its full focus of reflectors was pointed directly at me, then fading away, and so, for an instant, entirely disappearing, as it turned slowly toward the south. With the thick bank of clouds had come a cold wind from the north, premonitory of an approaching storm, though it might be days before it reached us—the only change to be now noted being the somewhat heavier swell of the surf, rolling up with a dull, sullen roar along the curve of the rock-bound shore.

I prepared for action. As I sat in the lantern,

the great brazen frame of polished reflectors swung around, once in each minute, within a few inches of the side. Beneath was the projecting handle of a crank, or lever, by pressing upon which the revolution could be instantly arrested. Stooping down, I could sit at ease, with my head clear from any contact with the lamps, and in that position could have the lever-handle within easy reach.

Waiting for a moment until the reflectors pointed directly toward Beacon Ledge, I pressed upon the crank, and thereby suspended the revolution. Thus inert and motionless I held the machinery for a full minute, and then, lifting the rod, allowed the circuit to recommence, and gazed anxiously toward the other lighthouse. For a moment, no response ; but then, as its reflectors came slowly around and pointed toward me, they, too, ceased in their motion for a full minute. With that my heart exulted. My signal for conversation had been seen and answered. So far, all went satisfactorily, and there was nothing left but to commence the main business of the night.

What should I talk to Jessie about ? I could not frame any lengthy sentences, indeed—for that, time and patience would not suffice. Nor could I tell her any especial piece of news : all such matters had already been discussed between us. Nor did it seem any thing but ridiculous to repeat, in such a labored manner, any of the ordinary commonplaces about health, or the time, or weather. The most I could do, in fact, would be

to telegraph some short and simple idea, expressive of my affection for her, and of my ardent faith in its coming realization. This she would comprehend, and, like a proverb, it would tell, in brief, a whole long story.

Watching until the reflectors again came round, I seized the lever, held the machinery in suspense for a whole minute, and then set it free again. Another circuit, and this time I arrested the motion for only fifteen seconds. A third, and here again a suspension of a whole minute. In this way, by putting the three circuits together, I had contrived to spell out the letter C—as in a telegraph office the operator would write a letter, though probably not the same one, with a long, a short, and a long scratch upon the paper slip.

Again : and now I let the reflectors remain stationary, first, for a minute, then twice for fifteen seconds each. This—a long, and two short arrestations—spelled the letter H. So, little by little, I wrote out with the lighthouse flash against the dark sky the simple sentence,

" Christmas is coming."

It was plain and expressive. It spoke to Jessie of the approaching day, when she should make her long-deferred decision, and when I so ardently anticipated that she would be mine. It reminded her that the time was now only a few hours distant. It told her that even those few hours were almost

too long for me to wait. It was a short message, indeed, but the difficulty of thus spelling it out, letter by letter, made it long enough. Already, ere I had finished, my arm, as well as my attention, was fatigued ; and when, at last, I made the long signal of conclusion, and gained, in reply, the token that I had been comprehended, I felt that I had done enough for one night, at least.

Then, remaining awake, with some difficulty, until morning came, I put out the lights, and went down to see after old Barry. He was better ; his rheumatism had not troubled him as much as he had feared ; he would get up, and himself trim the lights for the coming night, and I had better lie down and rest. Which I gladly did, for I was tired, indeed, and began to have a suspicion that, though lighthouse telegraphy might be a pleasant excitement for once, it was inferior, as a steady means of communication, to the regularly established mails. So, I slept the sleep of the weary, if not of the just ; and the morning was far advanced when I awoke.

The new day was not stormy, as I had partly anticipated it would be, nor yet was it clear and beautiful. The gale seemed slowly coming on, but had not quite reached us. The sky was thick with scudding clouds, racing wildly from north to south ; the air was cold and cheerless ; the sea rolled in with a more powerful swell than usual, breaking along the shore with a boom like that of heavy artillery. The gulls flew to and fro, scream-

ing and unsettled ; a few coasting schooners, apprehensive of mischief, had put into the land-locked bay and there lay at anchor, awaiting better weather ; and in one place, the fishermen were dragging their boats away back to the foot of the bluff, so as to avoid the still heavier swell which must ere long come. Yet, for all that, the storm had not commenced, and I could easily have walked over to Beacon Ledge and made my daily visit.

But still I forbore. I had already told Jessie that I should not see her again until I came to hear the decision of my fate, and I resolved that I would be firm. Would it not, beside, spoil the whole romance of our midnight correspondence were I to visit her again so soon ? I had signalled a greeting to her. What a lowering of sentiment it would be if now I were to obtain her response in commonplace manner, by mere word of mouth, instead of by the bright sheen of the lighthouse itself ! Nay, that would never do. So, killing the heavy hours as best I could, I loitered up and down the beach, shooting at the gulls as ineffectually as I had before shot at the sand-pipers ; watching the course of a few frightened vessels, which still continued to make for that little harbor of refuge ; and, like a child, making sand-forts on the beach, for the pleasure of seeing them washed away again by the next heavy swell.

Night came at last ; and, as before, I volunteered to relieve Barry of the care of the lamps, and

allow him additional opportunity to nurse his rheumatism. As before, he made some feeble show of hesitation, by way of reconciling his mind to the proffered rest, and then readily succumbed.

"Be it so, Georgy, my boy," he said. "That is, if you are not already too tired. But I don't feel as bad now as last night, and may yet crawl up and relieve you."

"Take it easy, Barry," I said. "It is not much trouble for me. I could stand it this fashion for a week."

With that I left him alone in his snugery, and climbed the stairs to the top. As upon the previous evening, I lighted the lamps, set the machine in motion, and then curled myself down in a corner of the floor to rest till midnight. I did not at once fall asleep, however. The gale, which had been preparing for the last thirty hours, now began to come in force, disturbing me with the sound of the wind—whistling shrilly through every crack and crevice—while the lighthouse itself constantly trembled with the blast. Even at that height, I could hear the sullen dash of the breakers against the shore; and once I could see, by the tremulous movement of lights far out to the eastward, that a large steamer was passing, and was laboring toilsomely with a more than usually heavy sea. She was in no danger, however, and gradually passed away from my line of vision. Then, at last, I fell asleep, though not into the soft, quiet slumber which I usually enjoyed. Even in my dreams the

tempest followed me, filling my mind with distorted imaginings. The old stories, which I had so often heard and of late had forgotten, about pirates, and wrecks, and wreckers, and cruelties perpetrated upon the beach, now seemed to take actual life and reality. I could see the dismayed vessels struggling among the breakers, and the rows of hard, fierce, expectant faces lining the shore, and awaiting the turning up of the dead bodies. I was a dead body myself, even, and was being washed up on the beach, already drowned beyond hope of resuscitation, and yet strangely conscious of all that went on around me. A hand was placed roughly upon me, as I lay motionless upon the sand. Then, gaining new life, I cried aloud, and, waking, found old Barry leaning over me, and shaking me into consciousness.

“Look over yonder, Georgy, my boy, at the Beacon Point,” he said. “See how strangely the lights are acting. What do you make of it all?”

I looked, and saw that the reflectors were pointing, motionless, toward me—resting there for a full minute; then they swept around slowly in their accustomed course, and again paused for a minute. Thereby I deciphered the letter M, and started into full and instant animation. I had, of course, overslept myself, and thereby, probably, lost a portion of Jessie’s dear message. How much of it, indeed?

“What is the hour, Barry?”

“Half-past twelve,” he said, “But what do

you make of yonder business? Is it some accident to the works, do you think?—or has old Barkstead gone on a spree again, as they say he once did, and is now playing fast and loose with the lights?”

While he had been speaking, new revolutions, broken, by longer or shorter pauses, had succeeded; and I deciphered the additional letters A and S.

“Whatever it may be, Barry,” I then answered—forcing myself to attend to him, and feeling a little guilty for being obliged to keep the mysterious secret from him—“don’t you see that nothing can be done about it, now? Go, therefore, to bed again. This cold lantern is no place for you to remain in. And to-morrow, bright and early, I will go out myself, and ascertain what may be the matter.”

With that, I gently pushed Barry down the first two or three steps, and heard him go grumbling and puffing the rest of the way to his own nook. Meanwhile, the bright signalling from Beacon Point went on—letter after letter—until, at last, I read out the whole sentence:

“——*mas has come.*”

“Christmas has come!” This, of course, was the completion of the message; for it was not now difficult to supply those letters which, through my tardy awakening, I had missed. My heart

bounded high with joy and exultation. Sanguinely as I had anticipated a favorable verdict at Jessie's hands, my utmost hopes had never asked for such a frank and instant admission of her preference as this. To be reminded, at the very first stroke of the midnight hour, that the important day for decision had arrived : what was this but being told that the day should bring its blessing with it?—that Jessie herself had awaited its approach as eagerly as I had, feeling as acutely the delay?—that now there should be no more disguise or misconstruction between us? Christmas had come ! It was, indeed, a frank and noble response to my message of the night before, telling me that now, at last, she had surrendered her heart to my safe-keeping. Had it been possible, I would have run over at once to Beacon Ledge, and pressed her to my heart. But, of course, not the tempest merely forbade. I must wait until the more suitable time of morning, still many hours off. Therefore, composing myself as well as possible for quiet waiting, I sat, during the remainder of the night, musing over my pleasant prospects, and watching anxiously for the first ray of morning.

It came at last—later than usual, for the tempest had not yet abated, and the approach of day was to be noted rather by the gradual lightening of the atmosphere, than by any gleam of eastern dawn. Then I extinguished the lights, stopped the machinery, and descended to old Barry.

“ I will now cross over to the Beacon Ledge,” I said, “ and find out what was the matter last night.”

“ Without your breakfast, boy ? ” growled the old man.

But what did I care for breakfast ! My heart was too full of joy to care for any carnal needs ; and, therefore, with some lame excuse for my hurry, and a guilty sense of continued deception weighing upon my mind, I set off, promising a speedy return. The task that I had set myself was no trifle, and I could not wonder at the solemn shake of the head with which Barry watched my departure. The tempest was at its height, and a blinding sheet of rain and ocean-spray drove wildly into my face at each step. The breakers dashed furiously upon the beach—so furiously, indeed, that the usual route along the hard-pressed sand had become impassable, and I was obliged to take a higher path through the loose, yielding pebbles. But I persevered bravely and determinedly, though so sorely fettered in my steps, and buffeted in my face, and, after nearly two hours, reached the other lighthouse.

I entered without ceremony, and, in the angle of the first flight of stairs—our usual trysting-place ever since the lateness of the season had denied us the rock by the sea-side—I found dear Jessie. But she was not alone. Beside her, and too near, I thought, sat a pleasant-faced young man, who, at my approach, arose, and with a miserably counter-

feited affectation of indifference, sauntered away. Jessie also arose, and with whitened face, came forward.

“ Why are you here ? ” she murmured. “ Did I not signal it all to you, so that you might know the truth, and spare both yourself and me this meeting ? ”

“ What do you mean ? ” I gasped.

“ Did you not understand me, after all, kind friend ? You know, indeed, that I once told you how I had loved another. I had no expectation of seeing him again, it is true. He was far away with his vessel when we departed from our little village, leaving, as you know, not a trace behind us ; and, therefore, there was no way in which the secret of our present retreat could be learned by any one. Nor could I write to him and tell him, for he had not yet spoken to me of love, and I did not know but what he would choose, in the end, to forget me. But Fate, after all, is sometimes kind. Searching for me, without any trace to guide him, he had almost despaired, when, the night before this last, coming in from sea, he saw the Penguin Light ; and noticing how, while you were signalling to me, at times it stopped for a moment, he thought it was the Upper Roadstead Light, and so ran in and made this little harbor by mistake. Thereby it was that we have chanced to meet again.”

“ But, Jessie, you signalled to me that— ”

“ I signalled that Thomas had come. Did you

not comprehend? Or can it be that I had never happened to mention his name to you?"

"Ah!" I feebly exclaimed, the light breaking in upon me; "Thomas was the word, then, was it? I thought—but no matter now for my thoughts. Well, farewell, Jessie. There can be no good word or wish that any one may give you that will not always be uttered twofold from my heart. You know it, kind friend, do you not?"

"I know it, George, indeed," she said.

And, tearing myself from her, I returned to city life. There I gave myself once more up to business and its cares, in hopes of drowning my disappointment; and now, after long months of sad regret, I have nearly succeeded, and have become myself again. But, at times, I lie awake in the middle of the night and listen to the city's roar, and in the sound I seem to hear once more the play of breakers on the shore at Beacon Ledge; and then I think, with sadness, how different might have been my lot, had I not so foolishly determined to utter, with the lighthouse lamps, and so many miles across, those words of greeting which should have been softly whispered instead, by lowly pleading lips, into closely attentive, willing ears.

Stories by American Authors.

X.

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PANCHA.

By T. A. JANVIER.

THE ABLEST MAN IN THE WORLD.

By E. P. MITCHELL.

YOUNG MOLL'S PEEVY.

By C. A. STEPHENS.

MANMAT'HA.

By CHARLES DE KAY.

A DARING FICTION.

By H. H. BOYESEN.

THE STORY OF TWO LIVES.

By JULIA SCHAYER.

NEW YORK
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1891

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PANCHA: A STORY OF MONTEREY.

BY T. A. JANVIER.

WHEN the Conde de Monterey, being then Viceroy of this gracious realm of New Spain, sent his viceregal commissioners, attended by holy priests, up into the northern country to choose a site for an outpost city, there was found no spot more beautiful, none more worthy to be crowned, than this where the city of Monterey stands to-day. And so the commissioners halted beside the noble spring, the *ojo de agua*, that gushes out from its tangle of white pebbles in what now is the very heart of the town; and the priests set up the sacred cross and sang a sweet song of praise and thankfulness to the good God who had so well guided them to where they would be; and the colonists entered in and possessed the land.

This all happened upon a fair day now close upon three hundred years gone by. From century

to century the city has grown, yet always in accord with the lines established by its founders. The houses a-building now are as the houses built three hundred years ago ; and, going yet farther into the past, as the houses which were built by the Moors when they came into the Gothic peninsula, bringing with them the life and customs of a land that even then was old. So it has come to pass that the traveler who sojourns here—having happily left behind him on the farther side of the Rio Grande the bustle and confusion and hurtful toil of this overpowering nineteenth century—very well can believe himself transported back to that blessed time and country in which the picturesque was ranked above the practical, and in which not the least of human virtues was the virtue of repose.

Very beautiful is the site of Monterey ; its noble flanking mountains, the Silla and the Mitras, are east and west of it ; its grand rampart, the Sierra Madre, sweeps majestically from flank to flank to the southward, and its outlying breastwork, a range of far-away blue peaks, is seen mistily off in the north. And the city is in keeping with its setting. The quaint, mysterious houses, inclosing sunny gardens and tree-planted court-yards ; the great cathedral where, in the dusk of evening, at vespers, one may see each night new wonders, Rembrandt-like, beautiful, in light and shade ; the church of St. Francis, and the old ruined church beside it—built, first of all, in honor of the saint who had guided the Viceroy's commissioners so

well ; the bowery *plaza*, with the great dolphin-fountain in its centre, and the *plazuelas*, also with fountains and tree-clad ; the narrow streets ; the old-time market-place, alive with groups of buyers and sellers fit to make glad a painter's heart—all these picturesque glories, together with many more, unite to make the perfect picturesqueness of Monterey.

Yet Pancha, who had been born in Monterey, and who never had been but a league away from it in the whole seventeen years of her life-time, did not know that the city in which she lived was picturesque at all. She did know, though, that she loved it very dearly. Quite the saddest time that she had ever passed through was the week that she had spent once at the Villa de Guadalupe—a league away to the eastward, at the Silla's foot—with her Aunt Antonia. It was not that *tia* Antonia was not good to her, nor that life at the Villa de Guadalupe—as well conducted a little town, be it said, with as quaint a little church, as you will find in the whole State of Nuevo Leon—was not pleasant in its way ; but it was that she longed for her own home. And when, coming back at last to the city, perched on the forward portion of *tio* Tadeo's *burro*, she peeped over the *burro's* long ears—at the place where the road turns suddenly just before it dips to cross the valley—and caught sight once more of the dome of the cathedral, and the clock-tower of the market-house, and the old Bishop's palace on its hill in the far background, with the

Mitras rising beyond, and a flame of red and gold above the Sierra left when the sun went down,—when Pancha's longing eyes rested once more on all these dear sights of home, she buried her little face in *tio* Tadeo's pudgy shoulder and fairly sobbed for joy.

Many a person, though, coming a stranger and with a stranger's prejudices into this gentle, lovely Mexican land, would have thought Pancha's love of home quite incomprehensible ; for her home, the house in which she dwelt, was not lovely to eyes brought up with a rigorous faith in right angles and the monotonous regularity of American city walls. In point of fact, persons of this sort might have held—and, after their light, with some show of justice—that Pancha's home was not a house at all.

Crossing the city of Monterey from west to east is a little valley, the *arroyo* of Santa Lucia, into which, midway in its passage, comes through another *arroyo* of a few hundred yards in length the water from the *ojo de agua*—the great spring whereat the Conde's commissioners paused content, and beside which the holy fathers sang songs of praise. Along both banks of these two little valleys grow trees, and canebrakes, and banana groves, and all manner of bushes and most pleasant grass ; and in among the bushes and trees, here and there, are little huts of wattled golden cane overlaid with a thatch of brown. And it was in one of these *jacals*, standing a stone's throw below the causeway that

crosses the *arroyo* of the *ojo de agua*, upon the point of land that juts out between the two valleys before they become one, that Pancha was born, and where most contentedly she lived. Over the *jacal* towered a great pecan tree ; and a banana grew graciously beside it, and back of it was a huddle of feathery, waving canes. Truly it was not a grand home, but Pancha loved it ; nor would she have exchanged it even for one of the fine houses whose stone walls you could see above and beyond it, showing grayly through the green of the trees.

For nearly all the years of her little life the love of the beautiful city of Monterey, of her poor little home that yet was so dear to her, of the good father and mother who had cared for her so well since she came to them from the kind God who sends beautiful children into the world, for her little brother and sister, the twins Antonio and Antonia, who gave a world of trouble,—for they were sad pickles,—but who repaid her by a world of childish lovingness for her care : for nearly all her life long these loves had sufficed to fill and to satisfy Pancha's heart. But within a year now a new love, a love that was stronger and deeper than all of these put together, had come to her and had grown to be a part of her life. And Pancha knew, down in the depths of her heart, that this love had begun on the very first day that her eyes had rested upon Pepe's gallant figure and handsome face—the day when Pepe, having been made captain of a brave company of *contrabandistas*, had come up to Monte-

rey to partake of the Holy Sacrament at Easter, and to be blessed by his old father, and to receive the congratulations of his friends.

Pancha's father, Christóbal, a worthy *cargador* who never in the whole twenty years that he had discharged the responsible duties of his calling had lost or injured a single article confided to his care, and old Manuel, who held the honorable position of *sereno*—a member of the night-watch—in the city of Monterey, had known each other from a time long before Pancha was born ; and from a full understanding of each other's good qualities, and from certain affinities and common tastes, the two old fellows had come in the course of years to be the closest friends. Cristóbal the *cargador*—better known, being a little bandy-legged man, as Tobalito—was scarcely less delighted than was Manuel himself when Pepe—a motherless lad who had grown to manhood in the care of a good aunt—came up from his home in Tamaulipas that Easter-tide to tell of his good fortune. The boy was a gallant boy, they both agreed,—as they drank his health more times than was quite good for them in Paras brandy of the best, on which never a *tlaco* of duty had been paid,—and before him had opened now a magnificent future. Being a captain of *contrabandistas* at twenty-two, what might he not be at thirty ? His fortune was assured ! And old Catalina shared in this joy of her husband's and of her husband's friend, and drank also, relishingly, a little mug of brandy to Pepe's good fortune—present

and to come. Even the twins, Antonio and Antonia, entered into the spirit of the festive occasion, and manifested their appreciation of it by refraining from signal mischief for the space of a whole hour : at the end of which period Pancha, perceiving that they were engaged in imitating the process of washing clothes in the stream, and judging rightly that the earnestness of their operations boded no good, was just in time to rescue the yellow cat from a watery grave.

And it was on this happy day, as Pancha knew afterward, that her love for Pepe first began.

This was a year past, now ; and for many months Pancha had been gladdened by the knowledge that her love was returned—though, as yet, this sweet certainty had not come to her in words. Indeed, during the past twelvemonth Pepe had been but little in Monterey. As became a young captain of *contrabandistas* who longed to prove that he deserved to wear his spurs, his time had been passed for the most part in making handsome dashes from the Zona Libre into the interior. Already the fame of his brilliant exploits was great along the frontier ; already to the luckless officers of the *contraresguardo* his name was a mocking and a reproach. What with his knowledge of the mountain paths and hiding-places, his boldness and his prudence, his information—coming it might be treason to say from where, but always exact and trustworthy—of where the revenue people would be at any hour of any day or night, the *contraresguardo* seemed to have no

more chance of catching him than they had of catching the wind of heaven or the moon itself.

Once, indeed, Pepe had a narrow escape. At the outskirts of Lampazos word came to him that the customs guard was at his very heels. There was no hiding-place near ; to run for it with a train of heavily laden *burros* was of no earthly use at all ; to run for it without the *burros* would have been a disgrace. And Pepe did not attempt to run. As fast as they could be driven he drove the *burros* into the town, and halted them in squads of three and four at friendly houses ; spoke a word or two at each door, and then galloped off with his men into the outer wilderness of *chaparral*. And when, ten minutes later, the men of the *contraresguardo* came flourishing into Lampazos, certain of victory at last, not a vestige of the *contrabando* could they find ! True, in the *patios* of a dozen houses were certain weary-looking *burros* whose backs were warm, and near them were pack-saddles which were warm also ; but what had been upon those pack-saddles no man could surely say. The explanation vouchsafed that the lading had been fire-wood was not, all things considered, wholly satisfactory ; but it could not be disproved. And as the possession of warm pack-saddles and warm-backed *burros* is not an indictable offense even in Mexico, the *contraresguardo* could do nothing better in the premises than swear with much heartiness and ride sullenly away. And to the honor of Lampazos be it said that when, in due course of time. Pepe re-

turned and withdrew his *burro*-train from the town, not a single package of the *contrabando* had been stolen or lost !

So Pepe, by his genius and his good luck, proved his right to wear his spurs. And the merchants of the interior held him in high esteem ; and people generally looked upon him as a rising young man ; and Pancha, who read aright the story told by his bold yet tender brown eyes, suffered herself to love this gallant captain of *contrabandistas* with all her heart.

Yet while this was the first time that Pancha had loved, it was not the first time that love had been given her. A dozen young fellows, as everybody knew, and as even she, though quite to herself, demurely acknowledged, were in love with her to their very ears. One or two of them had gone so far, indeed, as to open communications, through proper representatives, for the rare favor of her hand. The most earnest, though the least demonstrative of these, was a certain captain in the *contraresguardo*, by name Pedro ; a good fellow in his way, but quite shut out beyond the pale of reputable society, of course, by his unfortunate calling.

Naturally Pancha never was likely to think very seriously of loving Pedro ; yet pity for him, acting on her gentle heart, had made her in some sort his friend. It was not altogether his fault that he was an officer of the *contraresguardo*, and other people besides Pancha believed that but for this blight upon him a good career might have been his. But

luck had been against Pedro from the very day of his birth ; for when he was born his mother died, and a little later his father died also. Being thus left lonely in the world, he fell into the keeping of his uncle, Padre Juan, a grim priest who, having lost all happiness in life himself, saw little reason why he should seek to make the lives of others glad. Dismally the boy grew up in this narrow, cheerless home. The Padre fain would have made of him a priest also ; but against this fate Pedro rebelled, and accepted, while yet a boy, the alternative means of livelihood that his uncle offered him in the service of the *contraresguardo*.

As his rebellion against his proposed induction into the priesthood showed, the boy had strong stuff in him. He had a mighty will of his own. And there was this in common between him and his grim uncle : a stern resolve, when duty was clear, to do duty and nothing else. Therefore it came to pass that Pedro, being entered into the hateful service of the customs preventive force, presently was recognized by his superiors as one of the very few men of the corps who, in all ways, were trustworthy ; and as trustworthiness is the rarest of virtues in the *contraresguardo*,—a service so hated that usually only men of poor spirit will enter it at all,—his constant loyalty brought him quick promotion as its just reward. Yet Pedro had no happiness in his advancement. Each step upward, as he very well knew, was earned at the cost of greater hatred and contempt. Those who would

have been his friends, had the lines of his life fallen differently, were his enemies. Nowhere could he hope to find kindness and love. Therefore he grew yet more stern and silent, and yet more earnestly gave himself to the full discharge of the duty that was sacred to him because it was his duty, but that in his heart he abhorred. Nor did he ever waver in his faithfulness until, coming to know Pancha, his chilled heart was warmed by her sweet looks of friendliness, the first that ever he had known ; and, as fate decreed, the force of duty found arrayed against it the force of love.

Pancha had a tender, gentle nature, in which was great kindness ; and before she knew Pepe there was some little chance, perhaps, that in sheer pity of his forlornness she might have given Pedro her love. This, of course, showed how weak and how thoughtless Pancha was ; how ignorant of the feelings of society ; how careless of the good opinion of the world. To be sure, the possibility of her loving Pedro never passed beyond a possibility ; but that it went so far counted for a great deal to him, to whom, in all his life, no single gleam nor even faintest hope of love had ever come. The gentle glance or two which she had cast him in her compassionate sorrow for his friendlessness sank down into the depths of Pedro's heart, and bred there for her that great love—tender, yet almost stern in its fierce intensity—to which only a passionate, repressed nature can give birth. And through the year that passed after Pepe had gained

his captaincy, and at the same time Pancha's favor, Pedro's love had grown yet stronger and deeper,—growing the more, perhaps, because it was so hopeless and so deeply hid ; but Pancha, whose very life was wrapped in Pepe's now, had almost ceased to remember that such a person as this rueful captain of the *contraresguardo* lived.

Still another life-thread was interwoven with the life-threads of these three. Dearest of Pancha's girl-friends was Chona,—for so was shortened and softened her stately name, Ascencion,—daughter of a *leñador* whose *jacal* was near by, and with whom her father had long been on friendly terms.

A grand creature was this Chona, daughter of the *leñador*. The simple folk among whom she lived called her “La Reina,” and her majestic beauty made her look indeed a queen. Yet was she not loved by those among whom she lived. Her nature was as imperious as her beauty was imperial, and, save only Pancha, there was none who called her friend. Because of their very unlikeness, these two were drawn together. Pancha had for Chona an enthusiastic devotion ; and Chona graciously accepted the homage rendered as her queenly right. In the past year, though, since Pepe's triumphal visit to Monterey, a change had come over Chona that was beyond the understanding of Pancha's simple, loving heart. She no longer responded—even in the fitful fashion that had been her wont—to Pancha's lovingness. She was moody ; at times she was even harsh. More

than once Pancha, chancing to turn upon her suddenly, had surprised in her eyes a look that seemed born of hate itself. This change was grievous and strange to Pancha ; but it troubled her less than it would have done a year before. For now her whole heart was bright with gladness in her love of Pepe, and with the glad hope that his love was given her in return.

So, for Pancha at least, the time passed blithely on. Her mood of compassion for Pedro was forgotten, and her loss of Chona's friendship—if ever she had possessed it—caused her no great sorrow ; and all because her love for Pepe filled to overflowing her loving heart.

THIS was the way that matters stood the next Easter, when Pepe again came up to Monterey to take part in the blessed services of the church, to see again his old father, and again to receive graciously the congratulations of his friends.

And this time Pepe told his love to Pancha in words. In the warm twilight of the spring evening—being followed, as custom in Mexico prescribes, by the discreet *tía* Antonia, also come into Monterey for the Easter festival—they walked slowly among the bushes and trees lining the bank of the *ojo de agua*, passed beneath the arch of the causeway, and stood beside the broad, clear pool where the water of the great spring pauses a little before it flows outward to the stream. It was on this very spot, say the legends of the town, that the good

Franciscan fathers, three hundred years ago, set up the holy cross and sang their song of thankfulness and praise.

And here it was—while the discreet *tia* Antonia manifested her discretion by standing where she could watch closely, yet could not hear—that to Pancha were whispered the sweetest words that ever she had heard, that ever she was to hear. In her memory dwelt for a little while joyously the picture of the dark water at her feet that, a little beyond, grew duskily green with aquatic plants; the massive stone causeway that cast a shadow upon them in the waning light reflected from the red sky beyond the Mitras crest; the trees beside the spring swaying a little in the gentle evening wind; the hush over all of the departing day. Very dear to Pancha was the memory of this picture—until, in the same setting, came another picture, ghastly, terrible, that made the place more horrible to her than the crazing horror of a dream. But the future was closed to her, happily, and in her heart that Easter evening was only a perfect happiness and a perfect love.

Later, when they went back to the *jacal* of wattled cane, there was great rejoicing among the older folk that Pepe's suit had sped so well. It was not, of course, a surprise to anybody, this suit of his. In point of fact, it all had been duly settled beforehand between the two old men,—as a well-conducted love affair in Mexico properly must be,—and this dramatic climax to it was a mere nom-

inal concession to Pepe's foreign tastes, acquired through much association with *Americanos* upon the frontier. So, the result being satisfactory, the Paras brandy was brought forth again, and toasts were drunk to Pepe's and Pancha's long happiness. And these were followed by toasts to the success—though that was assured in advance, of course—of a great venture in which Pepe was about to engage ; a venture that infallibly was to make him a rich man.

The scheme that Pepe had devised was worthy of himself. Its basis was an arrangement—made who shall say how?—that all the forces of the *contraresguardo* and *rurales* should be sent on a wild-goose chase into the mountains, and sent far enough to make sure that they should stay in the mountains for a whole night and a whole day. And, the coast being thus cleared, it was the purpose of this daring captain of *contrabandistas* to come up from the Zona Libre with not one, but with three great trains of *burros* laden with *contrabando*, and to bring these trains, in sections and under cover of darkness, actually into the city of Monterey ! Further, to make quite sure that in the city he should meet with no hindrance to the execution of his plans, he had arranged that at the hour his trains were to enter from the east, a *jacal* should be set on fire over in the western suburb. Fires occur but rarely in Monterey, and when one does occur all the town flocks to see it : it is better than a *fiesta*. It was a stroke of genius on Pepe's part to

think of this diversion ; and the man who owned the doomed *jacal*—one of Pepe's band who himself had a share in the venture—was eager to put so brilliant a plan into execution. Indeed, to insure success a dozen *jacals* might have been profitably consumed, for the *contrabando* was to be exceptionally rich in quality as well as great in quantity, and the profit upon it would be something that to such simple-minded folk as Manuel and Tobalito and Catalina seemed almost fabulous.

The very risk of the venture, as Pepe pointed out, constituted its safety. In the mountains there was a chance at any time of a fight, but in the city streets there was literally nobody to fear—"unless the *serenos* should turn *contraresguardo* !" he suggested ; whereat there was much cheerful laughter, that of the honest *sereno* Manuel being loudest of all.

The *leñador*, Tobalito's trusted friend, hearing the sounds of festivity and snuffing the Paras brandy from afar off, came in to join them ; and being informed of the happy issue of Pepe's love affair, and of Pepe's noble project, he gladly joined in drinking the double toast and in adding his good wishes to theirs. So they made merry over their hopeful prospects ; and even when the twins, Antonio and Antonia, succeeded in an unwatched moment in possessing themselves of the precious bottle of Paras brandy, and thereafter, to their great joy, emptied a considerable portion of it over the unfortunate yellow cat, a mere desultory

spanking was deemed to be a meet atonement for the act.

So Pepe rode lightly out from Monterey, and behind him rode not black care, but brightest joy, and after him went good wishes and great love. When he came again he would be rich, and—dearer than all other riches—Pancha would be his. Truly, a young fellow of three and twenty, who had carved his own way to so brave a fortune, might well rejoice within himself; and Pepe did rejoice with all his heart. As he rode down the valley—the valley that is scarred by the railroad now—his thoughts ran back pleasantly over the past few years of hard work in his profession; over his many successes tarnished by not a single serious failure; and still more pleasantly his thoughts ran forward into the future, when all his toil was to receive, over and above a liberal compensation, a most sweet reward. One more deal in the game that he knew so well how to play, and all the stakes would be his. No wonder that Pepe's heart was glad within him; that his soul was filled with joy.

Yet Pancha, left behind in Monterey to wait while Pepe worked, was sorrowful. As sometimes happens to us when we are confronted by the certainty of great happiness, she was possessed by a gloomy sadness that came of dark forebodings in her mind. The very greatness and sureness of this happiness awed her into doubt. She knew that to take her good fortune in this faint-hearted way

was not wise in itself, and was not what Pepe would approve; and that she might please Pepe she berated herself roundly and tried to laugh away her fears—though they scarcely amounted to fears, being but shadowy doubts and unshaped thoughts in which always was a tinge of nameless dread. But scolding herself and laughing at herself were equally unavailing; therefore she betook herself to that refuge which is dear to women the world over, but which especially is dear to women in Roman Catholic lands—the refuge of prayer.

A placid, holy place is the church of San Francisco in Monterey. It stands upon a quiet street, the Calle de San Francisco, where little travel or noise of traffic ever comes, and about it always is an atmosphere of sacred rest. On one side of it is the ruin of the old, old church where, near three hundred years ago, the colonists sent northward by the Conde de Monterey first met within church walls to offer up to God their sacrifice of praise and prayer for the grace shown to them in bringing them within so fair a land. On the other side is the old convent, where long the good Franciscans dwelt, and whence they went forth to save poor heathen souls. The convent is deserted now, but holy memories live on in it, and sanctify its silent, sunny cloister and its still, shady cells. And close beside the convent grows a single stately palm, larger and more beautiful than any other palm in all the country round. The old church is shadowy within, and a faint smell of incense hangs

always in the dusky air. The floor is laid in panels of heavy wood, worn smooth by the knees of the five generations which have worshiped there, and beneath each panel is a grave. Reverently do the Mexicans believe that thrice blessed is the rest in death of him who sleeps within the earth made consecrate by bearing on its breast the house of God.

So it was to this old church, the church of her patron saint, whose name she bore, that Pancha came to pray that Pepe might prosper in his gallant adventure, and that the happiness in store for both of them might not be wrecked by evil chance. To pass from the heat and glare of the April sunshine into the cool, dark church was in itself a refreshment and a rest. Save an old woman or two, slowly and wearily moving from station to station and slowly and wearily at each station repeating her form of prayer, the church was deserted ; and in the quiet corner near the chancel rail where Pancha knelt, far away from the mumbling old women, there was a perfect quiet, a holy peace. Her prayer was a little simple prayer : only that the good Saint Francis would keep Pepe safe from all harm, and that the *contrabando* might not be captured, and that she and Pepe might be married as they had planned to be, and might live on in happiness together to a good old age. When she had made her prayer she knelt on for a long while, dreamily thinking of the Saint's goodness and of his mighty power to guard and save. And, as she

knelt there, gradually faith and hope came back again into her heart, and the conviction grew strong within her that the blessed saint had heard her prayer and had sent to her this comforting assurance that it should be granted to the full. So at last, heartened and quieted, she came out once more into the April sunshine. Yet, even as she left the church there passed before the sun a cloud. Pancha, whose mind was full of happy thoughts, did not perceive this cloud.

THAT day in Monterey one other heart was troubled, but to it came not peace nor rest. Much to her surprise, Pancha—standing near the causeway over which Pepe gallantly had ridden forth upon his brave adventure, her heart full of love and hope and fear—had felt an arm about her neck, and turning had found Chona by her side. In her tender mood this mark of affection from the friend whom she had deemed lost had moved her greatly, and with little urging she told to Chona the sweet happiness that at last certainly was hers; and wondered to see the look of hate—there could be no mistaking it now—that came flashing into Chona's eyes.

“And he loves a pitiful thing like *you*! Loves *you*, when he might—go! you are no friend of mine!”

In Chona's voice there was a ring of bitter contempt that lost itself, with the abrupt change, in yet more bitter rage. With an angry push that

almost threw Pancha into the water, she turned, sprang up the bank, and disappeared among the trees. So was Pancha made yet more sorrowful, and yet more gladly turned to the holy church for rest and comfort in prayer.

For Chona there was no comfort. Her brain was in a whirl, and in her heart was only wretchedness. The fate had come to her that for months past she had known must be hers ; yet now that it actually had overtaken her, she resented it as though it were a sudden and unexpected blow. Against hope she had hoped to win Pepe's love—and now all hope was dead, and she knew that her chance of having him for her very own was lost forever. Still worse was it that the love which she longed for so hungrily should go to another. This was more than she could bear. Pepe's death, she felt, would have caused her a pain far less poignant—for she herself easily could have died, too. But Pepe lost to her arms, and won to the arms of such a poor, spiritless creature as this Pancha, was an insult that made greater the injury done her a thousand-fold. Her fierce love was turned in a moment to fiercer hate ; and from hate is but a single step to revenge.

That night, when the *leñador* came home,—and in good spirits, for he had sold his wood well,—he told Chona gleefully of the grand project that Pepe had on foot ; of the clever scheme by which the customs people were to be tricked ; of the fine fortune that surely was coming to the captain of

contrabandistas now as a fitting culmination of his gallant career.

After her father, with a prodigious yawn, had ended his narration and had betaken himself to sleep, for a long while Chona sat there in the open space before the *jacal* alone with her own thoughts. In the darkness and stillness—for only the low, soft rippling of the water broke in upon the peacefulness of night—the longing for revenge that possessed her slowly took form in her mind. The hours passed swiftly as she brooded upon her wrong and upon the means that she had chosen to compass vengeance. When at last she arose and went into the *jacal*, the morning star shone bright above the twin peaks of the Silla, and the whole mountain stood out sharply, a huge black mass, against the clear, pale light of the eastern sky.

Yet the morning still was young when Chona—her father meanwhile having started with the *burro* for the mountains—went down to the barracks of the *contraresguardo* and asked of the sentinel on duty permission to see the *capitan*, Pedro. The sentinel smiled as he dispatched a messenger with her request, and thought what a lucky fellow the *capitan* Pedro was, to be sure.

“Come to me quickly in the Alameda,” said Chona, when Pedro had joined her. “I can tell you of a great plan that the smugglers have on foot—and also of a matter very near to your own heart.” Without waiting for an answer, she turned sharply and walked rapidly away.

Perceiving that she was much excited, Pedro did not doubt that Chona had information of importance to give him ; and his experience had taught him that the treachery of a jealous woman was not a thing that the customs preventive service could afford to despise. To the personal part of her address he did not give a second thought. Without returning to the barracks, he set off at once for the Alameda. The sentinel, lazily watching the two retreating figures, smiled again, and said to himself, "Aha! my little captain is a lucky man to-day!"

It is a good mile from the barracks to the Alameda. Chona covered the distance rapidly. As she entered the ragged pleasure-ground, she turned to make sure that Pedro was following her, and then crossed it quickly and disappeared through a gap in a hedge beyond. When Pedro passed through the gap he found her seated on the ground between the bushy screen and the cane-field that it inclosed. They were remote from all houses, from all curious ears ; for the Alameda, being but a forlorn place, has few visitors.

She motioned him to a seat beside her, and said, hurriedly :

"The *capitan* Pepe will bring three great trains of *contrabando* on Friday night into Monterey."

"Yes. He is your lover?"

She flashed her glittering black eyes on him savagely. "It is no affair of yours who my lover may be. But I will tell you this : Pepe is the lover of Tobalito's Pancha—the girl whom you love."

She marked with satisfaction how he winced under her words, the gleam of anger that came into his eyes. But, without giving him time to speak, she went on rapidly to tell of Pepe's plan, and with a clearness and precision that left no room for doubting that she told the truth. Her excitement increased as she spoke. Her black eyes grew blacker as the pupils dilated; her breath came short as her bosom rose and fell tremblingly; twice or thrice she pressed her hand upon her heart. As she ended she sprang to her feet and held erect her superb form. Her eyes gleamed with the anger of hate, her hands were clinched, her guardedly low voice quivered with a passionate energy.

"I have betrayed him into your hands, even as he has betrayed my offered love. Take him! Kill him! He has only my hate. And remember, it is he who has won from you Pancha's love. He must die!" In an instant she had plunged into the thicket of canes. For a few moments the rustling of the leaves sounded hissing as she fleetly pushed her way between them; the sound grew fainter; presently it faded out of hearing, and all was still.

Pedro stood for awhile motionless, vacantly staring at the place in the cane-thicket, still marked by the swaying leaves, where she had disappeared. Then slowly he passed through the gap in the hedge, and slowly walked across the Alameda. When he came to the circle of stone benches he sat down wearily. He did not in the least particular

doubt the truth of what Chona had told him ; and because he knew so surely that it was all true a great sorrow weighed upon him, a cruel conflict arose in his heart. Chona had told him too much. Had she told him only of Pepe's plans, her purpose would have been easily gained ; for in a strictly professional and matter-of-course way he would have crushed the smugglers' scheme effectually, and probably the smugglers with it. Chona, judging his nature by her own, had overshot her mark. The very fact that Pepe was Pancha's lover, that his ruin would be her misery, that his death might also be her death, made Pedro—for the first and last time in his life—regard his duty falteringly. For his love for Pancha was so loyal, so utterly unselfish, that even this very love he was ready to sacrifice for her ; ready, for her happiness' sake, to yield her to another's arms. The question that now confronted him was whether or not he could sacrifice for Pancha his honor.

What made this cruel strait in which Pedro found himself crueler still was the certainty that should he save his honor no one at all (yet it was only Pancha of whom he thought) would believe that in capturing Pepe he had been prompted by any higher motive than revenge. Should Pepe be harmed, Pancha would hate him ; should Pepe be killed,—and the chances favored this issue, for Pepe was a man who far rather would die than surrender,—Pancha would turn from him in horror, as a loathsome creature too base even to die.

These thoughts went whirlingly through Pedro's mind, and there came to him no safe issue from his perplexity. Toward whichever of the two paths before him he turned, he saw standing a figure with a drawn sword : Love barred the way of Honor ; Honor barred the way of Love.

At last, the conflict still continuing in his breast, he slowly arose from his seat on the stone bench, and slowly walked back into the town ; but he took the streets by the hospital and the market-place, thus leaving the *arroyo* of the *ojo de agua* far out of his path. As he entered the barracks the sentinel looked at him curiously. " Oho ! there has been a quarrel," he thought. " 'To quarrel with ' La Reina,' my little captain must be a very great fool !"

The noise and confusion, the loud talking and coarse laughter of the barracks jarred on Pedro, and presently he went out again. Walking without purpose, he retraced unconsciously his steps toward the Alameda. Then, finding of a sudden an object, he walked on rapidly until the shady lanes beyond the Alameda were traversed and he stood at the gate of the Campo Santo. Reverently he entered between the stone pillars of the gateway and stood in the presence of the holy dead.

In a shady corner of the old grave-yard he seated himself upon a stone that had fallen from the wall, and took up again resolutely the problem that he had to solve. There in the perfect peace and stillness, with only the dead about him for witnesses,

the great battle of his life was fought and won. His own faith in his manhood came back to him and gave him strength; the doubt and trouble were cast out of his soul; a steadfast light shone clearly upon the way that he must go. And the silent counselors around him confirmed his choice. By the very utterness of their silence, as it seemed to him, they were as strong voices declaring that Love is but the dying daughter of Time, while Honor is the deathless son of Eternity.

When he stood up, the fight ended, he was very pale, and sweat stood in great drops upon his forehead; but in every line of his figure was firmness. Erect and steadily—with something of the feeling, as he bethought him, that had upheld him once when leading his men upon a most desperate charge—he marched between the graves and out again through the gate-way. His resolute step was in keeping with his resolute purpose. Love lowered her sword and fell back, conquered. The path of Honor was clear.

BEING cheered by her prayer and by the good saint's promise that it should be granted, Pancha went home blithely and with a heart at rest. And further cheer came to her from her mother, the excellent Catalina. By profession, this good Catalina was a *lavandera*. Hers was a vicarious virtue, for while her washing was endless, its visible results rarely had any perceptible connection with herself. Indeed, it is a fact that the washer-women

of Mexico are upheld by so lofty a sense of their duty to their employers that only by the operation of some extraordinary law of chance is it that their own garments ever get washed at all.

Down by the edge of the clear stream, in company with many other washer-women, Catalina practised her honorable vocation, squatted upon the ground and having in front of her a broad, flat stone. On this stone she soaped and rubbed and squeezed each separate garment until her fine knowledge of her art told her that cleanliness had been achieved, and that for the perfecting of her work was needed only copious rinsing in the running stream. Close beside her, always, was a little fire, whereon rested a little boiler; and thence smoke and steam curled up together amidst the branches of the overhanging trees. On the low bushes near by were spread the drying clothes; in the middle distance stood out the straw-thatched hut; and beyond, for background, were trees and bushes and huts and half-hidden stone walls. And as near her as their perverse spirits would permit them to come were the twins, Antonio and Antonia, scantily clad or not clad at all, usually engaged in some small evil, or else basking like two little brown lizards in the sun. Some day an artist will come to Monterey who will paint Catalina at her work with all her picturesque surroundings; and if he paints the picture well, he will thereafter awake to find himself famous.

Pancha, joining this group, and perfecting it by

standing erect beside the bubbling boiler, was further cheered by Catalina's confident talk concerning the certainty of Pepe's success. Manuel had stopped at the *jacal* on his way homeward—coming sleepily back from his vigilant duties on the city watch—to leave the good news that a detachment of the *contraresguardo* really had been sent away early that morning toward Garcia—quite in the opposite direction from that whence Pepe would come. There could be no doubt about this assuring fact, for one of his fellow *serenos*, being on duty near the barracks, actually had seen the force depart. So it was clear that the most important part of the promise made to Pepe by his employers had been fulfilled. The other part, the massing of the *rurales* in the wrong place at the critical moment, might now confidently be counted upon—and this made sure that Pepe would accomplish safely his unostentatious yet triumphal entry into Monterey. As became the prospective mother-in-law of the hero of this noble adventure, Catalina greatly rejoiced; and Pancha, listening to such heartening news, was still more firmly convinced that the good Saint Francis had heard her prayer.

BUT even while these comforting thoughts upheld the hopes of the watchers in Monterey, Chona's treachery was doing its work. In the early morning of the third day after Pepe's departure there had been a tough fight south of Lampazos—and the end of it was the capture by the

contraresguardo of one of Pepe's three trains. Broken by a sudden charge, the guard of smugglers was overcome ; one or two were killed, half a dozen were captured, and the rest saved themselves by the speed of their horses and their knowledge of the mountain paths. The men of the *contraresguardo* were jubilant. But there was no joy in the heart of their captain. He had but the cold satisfaction of knowing that he had done his duty—and bitter he had found that duty to do.

When the scattered *burros* had been driven together, and their packs made fast again, the convoy set off southward ; for the capture had been made in the State of Nuevo Leon, and the *contrabando* would be turned into the custom-house at Monterey. Under the hot sun the train moved slowly along the valley ; so slowly that Pedro's horse, out-walking the short-stepping *burros*, carried him far in advance of his command. He was too deeply buried in his own thoughts to perceive his loneliness, and it was only when he reached the town of Salinas that he roused himself and found that his convoy was almost out of sight down the dusty, winding road. On the bluff above the Salinas River he tethered his horse to a tree, and sat down in the shade of the ferry-man's hut to wait for his men to overtake him. The *barquero* speedily slunk away ; but Pedro, heavy with his own heavy thoughts, took slight notice of his movements, save that he was glad to be left alone.

A quarter of a mile from where he sat the road dipped into a recess behind a shoulder of the mountain, and for a little space was lost to view. He watched the train until it entered this recess, and then, while waiting for it to reappear, he bowed his head upon his hand. His heart was very full of bitterness. There was but little comfort for him in the fact that the train that he had captured had not been commanded by Pepe in person ; for he knew that the precautions taken made the capture, either in the mountains or in Monterey, of the other two trains certain ; and not less certain was the capture or the killing of Pepe himself. Certainly Pepe's fortune, probably his life, already was as good as forfeited ; and with this forfeiture Pancha's hope of happiness was gone ! And the cruel part of it all was that Pancha ever must believe that he, willfully, revengefully, because she had kept back from him her love, had brought upon her this great misery. In the darkness that beset him he saw no way of hopeful light. He had saved his honor, but he had wrecked his heart.

A rattle of rifle-shots snapped short his dismal revery. As he sprang to his feet he saw a squad of his own people, a dozen or so, galloping up the road, and a moment later four times as many men came out from behind the shoulder of the mountain in sharp pursuit. The pursued were bent low over the necks of their horses ; from the crowd of pursuers there came each instant a puff of smoke

followed by the sharp crack of the report ; and each instant a horse fell, or ran wildly with empty saddle, as the balls went home.

Pedro loosened his revolver in his belt and sprang to his horse. The *barquero* had become visible again, and was standing beside him ; on his face was a malicious, yet not wholly unkindly grin. " Quick ! " he said. " Get into the boat. You yet have time. " As an officer of the *contraresguardo* he hated Pedro cordially ; but he had no especial wish to see him shot down, now that the smugglers had recaptured the *contrabando* and the fight was won. But Pedro already was mounted, and his horse was headed not toward the river, but toward his men. The *barquero* saw his purpose, and seized his bridle with a strong hand.

" God ! Señor Captain, would you ride straight to your death ? "

" Let loose, or I shoot ! "

Like a flash Pedro's revolver was drawn and cocked and within an inch of the *barquero's* head.

" You are a fool, a madman ! Go ! " And the man staggered aside as the horse, bounding forward, sharp stricken with the spurs, brushed against him, and nearly threw him to the ground.

" *Es mi deber !* " "'Tis my duty ! " came ringing back through the rush of air as Pedro rode furiously onward ; and it seemed to the *barquero*—yet this was so strange a thing that he could not trust his ears—that there was gladness, nay, even triumph, in Pedro's tone.

Whether spoken in sorrow or in hope, certain it is that these were the last words which the *capitan* Pedro spoke on earth.

IN Monterey there was no knowledge of the loss and of the gaining back again from the *contraresguardo* of a part of Pepe's treasure ; no knowledge that treachery had come in to defeat Pepe's well-laid plans. Therefore when at last the momentous day arrived, there was with Pepe's friends a glad expectancy and happy hope. Under all, of course, was somewhat of fear that even in the moment of its success failure might come and dash the gallant plan. And because of such dismal doubt, Tobalito's face at times was bereft of its accustomed cheeriness, and for minutes together he would sit silent, the while mechanically polishing the brass number that, as a *cargador*, he wore upon his breast, as was his wont on the rare occasions when his mind was beset by troublous thoughts. But these fears, in which, also, the others shared, had no endurance ; for all had steady faith in the all-powerfulness of Pepe's lucky star. So, slowly, the day wore on, and at last was lost in night.

Excepting the twins, Antonio and Antonia, no one that night slept in the *jacal*. Tobalito sat before his door and smoked incessantly his corn-husk *cigarritos*. Beside him, smoking not less vigorously, sat Catalina. A little apart from these was Pancha, holding in her arms the yellow cat. And

each of these three minds was so busy with its own thoughts that all of the three tongues were still. Only the yellow cat, having but little mind, and that being soothed into a calm content by Pancha's gentle strokings of her sleek fur, expressed her perfect happiness, and so made talk for the whole party, in a rumbling purr.

From where they sat—although they could not hope to see even the reflected light of the burning *jacal* that was to clear the way for the entry of the *contrabando*—they could see, a hundred yards away, the stone causeway standing out in the light of the young moon against the darkness beyond. Pancha's mind was full of sweet remembrance of the words which Pepe had spoken to her over beyond the causeway, beside the pool, but five little days before, and of the glad future that was bound up in the fulfilment of his hopes. Tobalito and Catalina, being somewhat beyond the age of romance, were thinking not less gladly of the good fortune that was in store for them through the rich son-in-law who had come to lighten the burdens of their old age. No more would the *cargador* bear heavy loadings of other people's goods ; no more would the *lavandera* wear her life out in washing other people's clothes. And so all three waited and watched eagerly, straining their ears for the rattle of horses' feet upon the stone-paved streets ; straining their eyes to catch the first glimpse of the *burro*-train stealing in from the Zona Libre with its rich load. For close beside them, across the causeway, the train

that Pepe himself headed was to pass. Now and again they caught sight of a little point of flame passing and repassing near the farther end of the causeway ; and they knew that it was the lantern of the *sereno*, and that Manuel also watched and waited hopefully to see his son, bearing his rich sheaves with him, come gallantly home. All four of these fond hearts were brimming full of love and hope and joy.

SLOWLY the young moon set, when suddenly Pancha was aroused by a strange confusion: pistol-shots—screams—a rush of horses' feet—oaths—the clash of steel—and on the causeway, dimly seen in the faint light, a confused mass of men and horses and laden *burros* were hurrying away before an orderly mass of horsemen riding in upon them from the east. And, before the full meaning of all this was clear to Pancha's mind, came another rush of horsemen charging down along the causeway from the west. Right under Pancha's eyes Pepe, surrounded by his foes, was fighting for his life ; and Pancha knew that the fight was hopeless, and that Pepe's life was lost ! Up at the end of the causeway she saw quivering for an instant the light of the *sereno's* lantern ; and a vast sorrow for the old man standing there, full of years, yet henceforth to be childless, for the moment overcame the bitter agony in her own heart. But only for a moment. Then, with a cry keen and woful, that echoed along the *arroyo*, and even for an instant made the

men pause in their deadly fight, with every drop of her sluggish but fierce Indian blood aroused and burning in her veins, she sprang to her feet, and but for Tobalito's strong, restraining grasp, she would have gone to Pepe's aid and died wildly striking by Pepe's side—as the Aztec women, her brave ancestors, fought and died on the causeways of Anahuac when the cruel Spaniards first came into the land. But Tobalito held her fast—and then a merciful unconsciousness came to give her breaking heart relief.

WHEN life came back to Pancha, she was alone in the *jacal*, save that in one corner lay the twins, Antonio and Antonia, still asleep ; and beside them, having fled thither for refuge during the noise and confusion of the fight, was huddled the yellow cat. Within the *jacal* a little candle feebly burned, casting a faint gleam of light through the open doorway out upon the broad, smooth leaves of the banana-tree. There was no sound to break the serene stillness of the night, and, for a little, Pancha half fancied, and tried hard to make herself believe, that she was but awaking from a woful dream. But the searching agony that wrenched her heart was too bitterly real to give a chance for this fond fancy to have play. And then, slowly but strongly, the thought came into her mind that she must go to Pepe ; that, if living, she must bear to him words of comfort and of hope ; that, if dead, she must cast one last loving look upon his face.

So she passed out into the darkness—for only a faint, hazy light beyond the Mitras showed where the young moon had sunk away behind the mountains—and walked along the path that she and Pepe had trod together but five days before. This time she did not pass beneath the arch of the causeway. Where the path forked she turned to the right and climbed the bank of the *arroyo* and so came out upon the causeway itself. In the darkness she tripped and nearly fell, and, looking closely, she saw at her feet the body of a man. Resolutely, yet shudderingly, she stooped still closer to see by the faint starlight the dead face, and knew it for the face of one of Pepe's companions. Beside the dead *contrabandista* lay another dead body, clad in the uniform of the *contraresguardo*; and the two lay facing each other as they had fallen in the fight. Beyond were yet others, and a dead horse or two, and a dead *burro*—from which the lading of precious stuffs had been hastily removed—and carbines, and swords and pistols were lying as they fell from dead hands; for, in the joy of their victory and capture, the *contraresguardo* had wasted no time in bearing away their fallen comrades or in clearing off the field. And Pancha, wofully seeking for Pepe, passed back and forth among the dead.

While she searched thus, she saw slowly coming from the far end of the causeway a little point of light, and presently the old *sereno* wrapped in his long cloak, stood beside her. In a broken sentence

or two he told her that, with Tobalito and Catalina, he had followed the *contraresguardo* to the barracks, and that Pepe was not among the prisoners, and so he had come back to look for him here. Pancha made him no answer in words, but she took his hand and kissed it ; and, still holding it, they searched together for the dead one who had been all in all to them in the world. Along the whole length of the causeway they searched, but found him not.

“ Yet he is here,” said Manuel. “ My boy is not a prisoner, and if not a prisoner, he surely was struck down in the fight.”

And Pancha knew that Manuel spoke truth : Pepe could not be safe and free from harm while his men were captured or slain.

While they paused midway upon the causeway, standing upon the arch that spans the stream, a low, faint moan sounded through the still night air. The sound came up from the darkness below—from the space beside the pool. Bending together over the edge of the unguarded footway, Manuel held down his lantern so that its light fell into the depth beside the wall and was reflected back in broken rays from the rippling water. Then he moved the lantern slowly, until the light rested upon the bank and shone on Pepe’s body stretched upon the ground—on Pepe’s face upturned toward them piteously ! And Pepe knew them. Up through the darkness came faintly the words, “ Pancha ! Padre ! ”

When, going very quickly, they passed to the end of the causeway, and so down the bank of the *arroyo* to where he lay, he clasped feebly their hands as they knelt beside him: the lantern throwing a weird, uncertain light upon the three, upon the dark stone wall, upon the dark water of the pool.

"It was a trap, my father; we were betrayed," he said brokenly. "But we made a brave fight, and I can die without shame."

He felt the quiver that passed through Pancha's body as he spoke.

"Yes, I must die, my Pancha. It is very near. All is ended that we planned—that we planned on this very spot, not yet a little week ago. It is hard, my little one—but—it—must—be." Then he was silent, and clenched his teeth—this brave Pepe—that his face might not show to Pancha his mortal agony.

Manuel held Pepe's hand and wept: the silent, forlorn weeping of an utterly desolate old man. Pancha could not weep. She clutched Pepe's hand in both of hers, as though forcibly she would hold him back to life. Pepe understood her thought.

"It may not be, my Pancha, my Panchita. It is very, very near now. Give me one little kiss, my heart,"—it was almost in a whisper that Pepe spoke,—“one little kiss to tell me of your love before I go.”

And so, for the first and the last time in her life, Pancha kissed Pepe upon the lips: a kiss in which

was all the passionate love that would have been his in the long years to come ; a kiss that was worth dying for, if only by dying it could be gained ; a kiss that for a moment thrilled Pepe with the fullest, gladdest life that he had ever known—and that, being ended, left him dead.

Then Pancha, kneeling where the holy fathers, far back in the centuries, had sung their *Te Deum laudamus*, kneeling where but five little days before her life had been filled with a love so perfect as to be beyond all power of thankfulness in words of praise, looked down upon her dead lover and felt her heart break within her in the utterness of her despair.

STANDING amidst the dead upon the causeway above, a dim shadow against the star-lit sky, was another figure—unperceived by, yet completing, the group below. The arms were raised, half threateningly, half imploringly, and the lithe, vigorous form swayed in unison with the wild throbbings of a heart in which sated hate did mortal battle with outraged love. Chona had conquered ; but even in the first flush of her triumph she knew that love and hope and happiness, that everything which makes life worth holding to, had been lost.

THE ABLEST MAN IN THE WORLD.

BY E. P. MITCHELL.

IT may or may not be remembered that in 1878 General Ignatieff spent several weeks of July at the Badischer Hof in Baden. The public journals gave out that he visited the watering-place for the benefit of his health, said to be much broken by protracted anxiety and responsibility in the service of the Czar. But everybody knew that Ignatieff was just then out of favor at St. Petersburg, and that his absence from the centres of active statecraft at a time when the peace of Europe fluttered like a shuttlecock in the air, between Salisbury and Shouvaloff, was nothing more or less than politely disguised exile.

I am indebted for the following facts to my friend Fisher, of New York, who arrived at Baden on the day after Ignatieff, and was duly announced in the official list of strangers as "Herr Doctor

Professor Fischer, mit Frau Gattin und Bed. Nordamerika.''

The scarcity of titles among the travelling aristocracy of North America is a standing grievance with the ingenious person who compiles the official list. Professional pride and the instincts of hospitality alike impel him to supply the lack whenever he can. He distributes Governor, Major-General, and Doctor Professor with tolerable impartiality, according as the arriving Americans wear a distinguished, a martial, or a studious air. Fisher owed his title to his spectacles.

It was still early in the season. The theatre had not yet opened. The hotels were hardly half full, the concerts in the kiosk at the Conversationshaus were heard by scattering audiences, and the shopkeepers of the Bazaar had no better business than to spend their time in bewailing the degeneracy of Baden Baden since an end was put to the play. Few excursionists disturbed the meditations of the shrivelled old custodian of the tower on the Mercuriusberg. Fisher found the place very stupid—as stupid as Saratoga in June or Long Branch in September. He was impatient to get to Switzerland, but his wife had contracted a table d'hôte intimacy with a Polish countess, and she positively refused to take any step that would sever so advantageous a connection.

One afternoon Fisher was standing on one of the little bridges that span the gutterwide Oosbach, idly gazing into the water and wondering whether

a good sized Rangely trout could swim the stream without personal inconvenience, when the porter of the Badischer Hof came to him on the run.

"Herr Doctor Professor!" cried the porter, touching his cap. "I pray you pardon, but the highborn the Baron Savitch out of Moscow, of the General Ignatieff's suite, suffers himself in a terrible fit, and appears to die."

In vain Fisher assured the porter that it was a mistake to consider him a medical expert; that he professed no science save that of draw poker; that if a false impression prevailed in the hotel it was through a blunder for which he was in no way responsible; and that, much as he regretted the unfortunate condition of the highborn the Baron out of Moscow, he did not feel that his presence in the chamber of sickness would be of the slightest benefit. It was impossible to eradicate the idea that possessed the porter's mind. Finding himself fairly dragged toward the hotel, Fisher at length concluded to make a virtue of necessity and to render his explanations to the Baron's friends.

The Russian's apartments were upon the second floor, not far from those occupied by Fisher. A French valet, almost beside himself with terror, came hurrying out of the room to meet the porter and the Doctor Professor. Fisher again attempted to explain, but to no purpose. The valet also had explanations to make, and the superior fluency of his French enabled him to monopolize the conversation. No, there was nobody there—nobody but

himself, the faithful Auguste of the Baron. His Excellency, the General Ignatieff, his Highness, the Prince Koloff, Dr. Rapperschwyll, all the suite, all the world, had driven out that morning to Gernsbach. The Baron, meanwhile, had been seized by an effraying malady, and he, Auguste, was desolate with apprehension. He entreated Monsieur to lose no time in parley, but to hasten to the bedside of the Baron, who was already in the agonies of dissolution.

Fisher followed Auguste into the inner room. The Baron, in his boots, lay upon the bed, his body bent almost double by the unrelenting gripe of a distressful pain. His teeth were tightly clenched, and the rigid muscles around the mouth distorted the natural expression of his face. Every few seconds a prolonged groan escaped him. His fine eyes rolled piteously. Anon, he would press both hands upon his abdomen and shiver in every limb in the intensity of his suffering.

Fisher forgot his explanations. Had he been a Doctor Professor in fact, he could not have watched the symptoms of the Baron's malady with greater interest.

"Can Monsieur preserve him?" whispered the terrified Auguste.

"Perhaps," said Monsieur, dryly.

Fisher scribbled a note to his wife on the back of a card and dispatched it in the care of the hotel porter. That functionary returned with great promptness, bringing a black bottle and a glass

The bottle had come in Fisher's trunk to Baden all the way from Liverpool, had crossed the sea to Liverpool from New York, and had journeyed to New York direct from Bourbon County, Kentucky. Fisher seized it eagerly but reverently, and held it up against the light. There were still three inches or three inches and a half in the bottom. He uttered a grunt of pleasure.

"There is some hope of saving the Baron," he remarked to Auguste.

Fully one-half of the precious liquid was poured into the glass and administered without delay to the groaning, writhing patient. In a few minutes Fisher had the satisfaction of seeing the Baron sit up in bed. The muscles around his mouth relaxed, and the agonized expression was superseded by a look of placid contentment.

Fisher now had an opportunity to observe the personal characteristics of the Russian Baron. He was a young man of about thirty-five, with exceedingly handsome and clear-cut features, but a peculiar head. The peculiarity of his head was that it seemed to be perfectly round on top—that is, its diameter from ear to ear appeared quite equal to its anterior and posterior diameter. The curious effect of this unusual conformation was rendered more striking by the absence of all hair. There was nothing on the Baron's head but a tightly fitting skull cap of black silk. A very deceptive wig hung upon one of the bed posts.

Being sufficiently recovered to recognize the

presence of a stranger, Savitch made a courteous bow.

"How do you find yourself now?" inquired Fisher, in bad French.

"Very much better, thanks to Monsieur," replied the Baron, in excellent English, spoken in a charming voice. "Very much better, though I feel a certain dizziness here." And he pressed his hand to his forehead.

The valet withdrew at a sign from his master, and was followed by the porter. Fisher advanced to the bedside and took the Baron's wrist. Even his unpractised touch told him that the pulse was alarmingly high. He was much puzzled, and not a little uneasy at the turn which the affair had taken. "Have I got myself and the Russian into an infernal scrape?" he thought. "But no—he's well out of his teens, and half a tumbler of such whiskey as that ought not to go to a baby's head."

Nevertheless, the new symptoms developed themselves with a rapidity and poignancy that made Fisher feel uncommonly anxious. Savitch's face became as white as marble—its paleness rendered startling by the sharp contrast of the black skull cap. His form reeled as he sat on the bed, and he clasped his head convulsively with both hands, as if in terror lest it burst.

"I had better call your valet," said Fisher, nervously.

"No, no!" gasped the Baron. "You are a medical man, and I shall have to trust you. There

is something—wrong—here.” With a spasmodic gesture he vaguely indicated the top of his head.

“But I am not—” stammered Fisher.

“No words!” exclaimed the Russian, imperiously. “Act at once—there must be no delay. Unscrew the top of my head!”

Savitch tore off his skull cap and flung it aside. Fisher has no words to describe the bewilderment with which he beheld the actual fabric of the Baron’s cranium. The skull cap had concealed the fact that the entire top of Savitch’s head was a dome of polished silver.

“Unscrew it!” said Savitch again.

Fisher reluctantly placed both hands upon the silver skull and exerted a gentle pressure toward the left. The top yielded, turning easily and truly in its threads.

“Faster!” said the Baron, faintly. “I tell you no time must be lost.” Then he swooned.

At this instant there was a sound of voices in the outer room, and the door leading into the Baron’s bed-chamber was violently flung open and as violently closed. The new-comer was a short, spare man of middle age, with a keen visage and piercing, deep-set little gray eyes. He stood for a few seconds scrutinizing Fisher with a sharp, almost fiercely jealous regard.

The Baron recovered his consciousness and opened his eyes.

“Dr. Rapperschwyll!” he exclaimed.

Dr. Rapperschwyll, with a few rapid strides,

approached the bed and confronted Fisher and Fisher's patient. "What is all this?" he angrily demanded.

Without waiting for a reply he laid his hand rudely upon Fisher's arm and pulled him away from the Baron. Fisher, more and more astonished, made no resistance, but suffered himself to be led, or pushed, toward the door. Dr. Rapperschwyll opened the door wide enough to give the American exit, and then closed it with a vicious slam. A quick click informed Fisher that the key had been turned in the lock.

II.

THE next morning Fisher met Savitch coming from the Trinkhalle. The Baron bowed with cold politeness and passed on. Later in the day a valet de place handed to Fisher a small parcel, with the message: "Dr. Rapperschwyll supposes that this will be sufficient." The parcel contained two gold pieces of twenty marks.

Fisher gritted his teeth. "He shall have back his forty marks," he muttered to himself, "but I will have his confounded secret in return."

Then Fisher discovered that even a Polish countess has her uses in the social economy.

Mrs. Fisher's table d'hôte friend was amiability itself, when approached by Fisher (through Fisher's wife) on the subject of the Baron Savitch of Moscow. Know anything about the Baron Savitch? Of course she did, and about everybody else worth knowing in Europe. Would she kindly communicate her knowledge? Of course she would, and be enchanted to gratify in the slightest degree the charming curiosity of her Americaine. It was quite refreshing for a *blasée* old woman, who had long since ceased to feel much interest in contemporary men, women, things and events, to encounter one so recently from the boundless prairies of the new world as to cherish a piquant inquisitiveness about the affairs of the grand monde. Ah! yes, she would very willingly communicate the history of the Baron Savitch of Moscow, if that would amuse her dear Americaine.

The Polish countess abundantly redeemed her promise, throwing in for good measure many choice bits of gossip and scandalous anecdotes about the Russian nobility, which are not relevant to the present narrative. Her story, as summarized by Fisher, was this :

The Baron Savitch was not of an old creation. There was a mystery about his origin that had never been satisfactorily solved in St. Petersburg or in Moscow. It was said by some that he was a foundling from the Vospitatelnoi Dom. Others believed him to be the unacknowledged son of a certain illustrious personage nearly related to the

House of Romanoff. The latter theory was the more probable, since it accounted in a measure for the unexampled success of his career from the day that he was graduated at the University of Dorpat.

Rapid and brilliant beyond precedent this career had been. He entered the diplomatic service of the Czar, and for several years was attached to the legations at Vienna, London, and Paris. Created a Baron before his twenty-fifth birthday for the wonderful ability displayed in the conduct of negotiations of supreme importance and delicacy with the House of Hapsburg, he became a pet of Gortchakoff's, and was given every opportunity for the exercise of his genius in diplomacy. It was even said in well-informed circles at St. Petersburg that the guiding mind which directed Russia's course throughout the entire Eastern complication, which planned the campaign on the Danube, effected the combinations that gave victory to the Czar's soldiers, and which meanwhile held Austria aloof, neutralized the immense power of Germany, and exasperated England only to the point where wrath expends itself in harmless threats, was the brain of the young Baron Savitch. It was certain that he had been with Ignatieff at Constantinople when the trouble was first fomented, with Shouvaloff in England at the time of the secret conference agreement, with the Grand Duke Nicholas at Adrianople when the protocol of an armistice was signed, and would soon be in Berlin behind the scenes of the Congress, where it was expected that

he would outwit the statesmen of all Europe, and play with Bismarck and Disraeli as a strong man plays with two kicking babies.

But the countess had concerned herself very little with this handsome young man's achievements in politics. She had been more particularly interested in his social career. His success in that field had been not less remarkable. Although no one knew with positive certainty his father's name, he had conquered an absolute supremacy in the most exclusive circles surrounding the imperial court. His influence with the Czar himself was supposed to be unbounded. Birth apart, he was considered the best *parti* in Russia. From poverty and by the sheer force of intellect he had won for himself a colossal fortune. Report gave him forty million roubles, and doubtless report did not exceed the fact. Every speculative enterprise which he undertook, and they were many and various, was carried to sure success by the same qualities of cool, unerring judgment, far-reaching sagacity, and apparently superhuman power of organizing, combining, and controlling, which had made him in politics the phenomenon of the age.

About Dr. Rapperschwyll? Yes, the countess knew him by reputation and by sight. He was the medical man in constant attendance upon the Baron Savitch, whose high-strung mental organization rendered him susceptible to sudden and alarming attacks of illness. Dr. Rapperschwyll was a Swiss—had originally been a watchmaker or

artisan of some kind, she had heard. For the rest, he was a commonplace little old man, devoted to his profession and to the Baron, and evidently devoid of ambition, since he wholly neglected to turn the opportunities of his position and connections to the advancement of his personal fortunes.

Fortified with this information, Fisher felt better prepared to grapple with Rapperschwyll for the possession of the secret. For five days he lay in wait for the Swiss physician. On the sixth day the desired opportunity unexpectedly presented itself.

Half way up the Mercuriusberg, late in the afternoon, he encountered the custodian of the ruined tower, coming down. "No, the tower was not closed. A gentleman was up there, making observations of the country, and he, the custodian, would be back in an hour or two." So Fisher kept on his way.

The upper part of this tower is in a dilapidated condition. The lack of a stairway to the summit is supplied by a temporary wooden ladder. Fisher's head and shoulders were hardly through the trap that opens to the platform, before he discovered that the man already there was the man whom he sought. Dr. Rapperschwyll was studying the topography of the Black Forest through a pair of field glasses.

Fisher announced his arrival by an opportune stumble and a noisy effort to recover himself, at the same instant aiming a stealthy kick at the top-

most round of the ladder, and scrambling ostentatiously over the edge of the trap. The ladder went down thirty or forty feet with a racket, clattering and banging against the walls of the tower.

Dr. Rapperschwyll at once appreciated the situation. He turned sharply around, and remarked with a sneer, "Monsieur is unaccountably awkward." Then he scowled and showed his teeth, for he recognized Fisher.

"It is rather unfortunate," said the New Yorker, with imperturbable coolness. "We shall be imprisoned here a couple of hours at the shortest. Let us congratulate ourselves that we each have intelligent company, besides a charming landscape to contemplate."

The Swiss coldly bowed, and resumed his topographical studies. Fisher lighted a cigar.

"I also desire," continued Fisher, puffing clouds of smoke in the direction of the Teufelmühle, "to avail myself of this opportunity to return forty marks of yours, which reached me, I presume, by a mistake."

"If Monsieur the American physician was not satisfied with his fee," rejoined Rapperschwyll, venomously, "he can without doubt have the affair adjusted by applying to the Baron's valet."

Fisher paid no attention to this thrust, but calmly laid the gold pieces upon the parapet, directly under the nose of the Swiss.

"I could not think of accepting any fee," he said, with deliberate emphasis. "I was abundant-

ly rewarded for my trifling services by the novelty and interest of the case."

The Swiss scanned the American's countenance long and steadily with his sharp little gray eyes. At length he said, carelessly :

"Monsieur is a man of science?"

"Yes," replied Fisher, with a mental reservation in favor of all sciences save that which illuminates and dignifies our national game.

"Then," continued Dr. Rapperschwyll, "Monsieur will perhaps acknowledge that a more beautiful or more extensive case of trephining has rarely come under his observation."

Fisher slightly raised his eyebrows.

"And Monsieur will also understand, being a physician," continued Dr. Rapperschwyll, "the sensitiveness of the Baron himself, and of his friends upon the subject. He will therefore pardon my seeming rudeness at the time of his discovery."

"He is smarter than I supposed," thought Fisher. "He holds all the cards, while I have nothing—nothing, except a tolerably strong nerve when it comes to a game of bluff."

"I deeply regret that sensitiveness," he continued, aloud, "for it had occurred to me that an accurate account of what I saw, published in one of the scientific journals of England or America, would excite wide attention, and no doubt be received with interest on the Continent."

"What you saw?" cried the Swiss, sharply. "It

is false. You saw nothing—when I entered you had not even removed the——”

Here he stopped short and muttered to himself, as if cursing his own impetuosity. Fisher celebrated his advantage by tossing away his half-burned cigar and lighting a fresh one.

“Since you compel me to be frank,” Dr. Rapperschwyll went on, with visibly increasing nervousness. “I will inform you that the Baron has assured me that you saw nothing. I interrupted you in the act of removing the silver cap.”

“I will be equally frank,” replied Fisher, stiffening his face for a final effort. “On that point, the Baron is not a competent witness. He was in a state of unconsciousness for some time before you entered. Perhaps I was removing the silver cap when you interrupted me——”

Dr. Rapperschwyll turned pale.

“And, perhaps,” said Fisher, coolly, “I was replacing it.”

The suggestion of this possibility seemed to strike Rapperschwyll like a sudden thunderbolt from the clouds. His knees parted, and he almost sank to the floor. He put his hands before his eyes, and wept like a child, or, rather, like a broken old man.

“He will publish it! He will publish it to the court and to the world!” he cried, hysterically. “And at this crisis——”

Then, by a desperate effort, the Swiss appeared to recover to some extent his self-control. He

paced the diameter of the platform for several minutes, with his head bent and his arms folded across the breast. Turning again to his companion, he said :

“ If any sum you may name will——”

Fisher cut the proposition short with a laugh.

“ Then,” said Rapperschwyll, “ if—if I throw myself on your generosity——”

“ Well ?” demanded Fisher.

“ And ask a promise, on your honor, of absolute silence concerning what you have seen ?”

“ Silence until such time as the Baron Savitch shall have ceased to exist ?”

“ That will suffice,” said Rapperschwyll. “ For when he ceases to exist I die. And your conditions ?”

“ The whole story, here and now, and without reservation.”

“ It is a terrible price to ask me,” said Rapperschwyll, “ but larger interests than my pride are at stake. You shall hear the story.

“ I was bred a watchmaker,” he continued, after a long pause, “ in the Canton of Zurich. It is not a matter of vanity when I say that I achieved a marvellous degree of skill in the craft. I developed a faculty of invention that led me into a series of experiments regarding the capabilities of purely mechanical combinations. I studied and improved upon the best automata ever constructed by human ingenuity. Babbage’s calculating machine especially interested me. I saw in Babbage’s idea the

germ of something infinitely more important to the world.

“ Then I threw up my business and went to Paris to study physiology. I spent three years at the Sorbonne and perfected myself in that branch of knowledge. Meanwhile, my pursuits had extended far beyond the purely physical sciences. Psychology engaged me for a time ; and then I ascended into the domain of sociology, which, when adequately understood, is the summary and final application of all knowledge.

“ It was after years of preparation, and as the outcome of all my studies, that the great idea of my life, which had vaguely haunted me ever since the Zurich days, assumed at last a well-defined and perfect form.”

The manner of Dr. Rapperschwyll had changed from distrustful reluctance to frank enthusiasm. The man himself seemed transformed. Fisher listened attentively and without interrupting the relation. He could not help fancying that the necessity of yielding the secret, so long and so jealously guarded by the physician, was not entirely distasteful to the enthusiast.

“ Now, attend, Monsieur,” continued Dr. Rapperschwyll, “ to several separate propositions which may seem at first to have no direct bearing on each other.

“ My endeavors in mechanism had resulted in a machine which went far beyond Babbage’s in its powers of calculation. Given the data, there

was no limit to the possibilities in this direction. Babbage's cogwheels and pinions calculated logarithms, calculated an eclipse. It was fed with figures, and produced results in figures. Now, the relations of cause and effect are as fixed and unalterable as the laws of arithmetic. Logic is, or should be, as exact a science as mathematics. My new machine was fed with facts, and produced conclusions. In short, it *reasoned*; and the results of its reasoning were always true, while the results of human reasoning are often, if not always, false. The source of error in human logic is what the philosophers call the 'personal equation.' My machine eliminated the personal equation; it proceeded from cause to effect, from premise to conclusion, with steady precision. The human intellect is fallible; my machine was, and is, infallible in its processes.

"Again, physiology and anatomy had taught me the fallacy of the medical superstition which holds the gray matter of the brain and the vital principle to be inseparable. I had seen men living with pistol balls imbedded in the medulla oblongata. I had seen the hemispheres and the cerebellum removed from the crania of birds and small animals, and yet they did not die. I believed that, though the brain were to be removed from a human skull, the subject would not die, although he would certainly be divested of the intelligence which governed all save the purely involuntary actions of his body.

“ Once more : a profound study of history from the sociological point of view, and a not inconsiderable practical experience of human nature, had convinced me that the greatest geniuses that ever existed were on a plane not so very far removed above the level of average intellect. The grandest peaks in my native country, those which all the world knows by name, tower only a few hundred feet above the countless unnamed peaks that surround them. Napoleon Bonaparte towered only a little over the ablest men around him. Yet that little was everything, and he overran Europe. A man who surpassed Napoleon, as Napoleon surpassed Murat, in the mental qualities which transmute thought into fact, would have made himself master of the whole world.

“ Now, to fuse these three propositions into one : suppose that I take a man, and, by removing the brain that enshrines all the errors and failures of his ancestors away back to the origin of the race, remove all sources of weakness in his future career. Suppose, that in place of the fallible intellect which I have removed, I endow him with an artificial intellect that operates with the certainty of universal laws. Suppose that I launch this superior being, who reasons truly, into the hurly burly of his inferiors, who reason falsely, and await the inevitable result with the tranquillity of a philosopher.

“ Monsieur, you have my secret. That is precisely what I have done. In Moscow, where my friend Dr. Duchat had charge of the new institu-

tion of St. Vasili for hopeless idiots, I found a boy of eleven whom they called Stépan Borovitch. Since he was born, he had not seen, heard, spoken or thought. Nature had granted him, it was believed, a fraction of the sense of smell, and perhaps a fraction of the sense of taste, but of even this there was no positive ascertainment. Nature had walled in his soul most effectually. Occasional inarticulate murmurings, and an incessant knitting and kneading of the fingers were his only manifestations of energy. On bright days they would place him in a little rocking-chair, in some spot where the sun fell warm, and he would rock to and fro for hours, working his slender fingers and mumbling forth his satisfaction at the warmth in the plaintive and unvarying refrain of idiocy. The boy was thus situated when I first saw him.

"I begged Stépan Borovitch of my good friend Dr. Duchat. If that excellent man had not long since died he should have shared in my triumph. I took Stépan to my home and plied the saw and the knife. I could operate on that poor, worthless, useless, hopeless travesty of humanity as fearlessly and as recklessly as upon a dog bought or caught for vivisection. That was a little more than twenty years ago. To-day Stépan Borovitch wields more power than any other man on the face of the earth. In ten years he will be the autocrat of Europe, the master of the world. He never errs; for the machine that reasons beneath his silver skull never makes a mistake."

Fisher pointed downward at the old custodian of the tower, who was seen toiling up the hill.

“Dreamers,” continued Dr. Rapperschwyll, “have speculated on the possibility of finding among the ruins of the older civilizations some brief inscription which shall change the foundations of human knowledge. Wiser men deride the dream, and laugh at the idea of scientific kabbala. The wiser men are fools. Suppose that Aristotle had discovered on a cuneiform-covered tablet at Nineveh the few words, ‘Survival of the Fittest.’ Philosophy would have gained twenty-two hundred years. I will give you, in almost as few words, a truth equally pregnant. *The ultimate evolution of the creature is into the creator.* Perhaps it will be twenty-two hundred years before the truth finds general acceptance, yet it is not the less a truth. The Baron Savitch is my creature, and I am his creator—creator of the ablest man in Europe, the ablest man in the world.

“Here is our ladder,” Monsieur. “I have fulfilled my part of the agreement. Remember yours.”

III.

AFTER a two months' tour of Switzerland and the Italian lakes, the Fishers found themselves at the Hotel Splendide in Paris, surrounded by people

from the States. It was a relief to Fisher, after his somewhat bewildering experience at Baden, followed by a surfeit of stupendous and ghostly snow peaks, to be once more among those who discriminated between a straight flush and a crooked straight, and whose bosoms thrilled responsive to his own at the sight of the star-spangled banner. It was particularly agreeable for him to find at the Hotel Splendide, in a party of Easterners who had come over to see the Exposition, Miss Bella Ward, of Portland, a pretty and bright girl, affianced to his best friend in New York.

With much less pleasure, Fisher learned that the Baron Savitch was in Paris, fresh from the Berlin Congress, and that he was the lion of the hour with the select few who read between the written lines of politics and knew the dummies of diplomacy from the real players in the tremendous game. Dr. Rapperschwyll was not with the Baron. He was detained in Switzerland, at the deathbed of his aged mother.

This last piece of information was welcome to Fisher. The more he reflected upon the interview on the Mercuriusberg, the more strongly he felt it to be his intellectual duty to persuade himself that the whole affair was an illusion, not a reality. He would have been glad, even at the sacrifice of his confidence in his own astuteness, to believe that the Swiss doctor had been amusing himself at the expense of his credulity. But the remembrance of the scene in the Baron's bedroom at the Badischer

Hof was too vivid to leave the slightest ground for this theory. He was obliged to be content with the thought that he should soon place the broad Atlantic between himself and a creature so unnatural, so dangerous, so monstrously impossible as the Baron Savitch.

Hardly a week had passed before he was thrown again into the society of that impossible person.

The ladies of the American party met the Russian Baron at a ball in the New Continental Hotel. They were charmed with his handsome face, his refinement of manner, his intelligence and wit. They met him again at the American Minister's, and, to Fisher's unspeakable consternation, the acquaintance thus established began to make rapid progress in the direction of intimacy. Baron Savitch became a frequent visitor at the Hot l Splendide.

Fisher does not like to dwell upon this period. For a month his peace of mind was rent alternately by apprehension and disgust. He is compelled to admit that the Baron's demeanor toward himself was most friendly, although no allusion was made on either side to the incident at Baden. But the knowledge that no good could come to his friends from this association with a being in whom the moral principle had no doubt been supplanted by a system of cog-gear, kept him continually in a state of distraction. He would gladly have explained to his American friends the true character of the Russian, that he was not a man of healthy

mental organization, but merely a marvel of mechanical ingenuity, constructed upon a principle subversive of all society as at present constituted—in short, a monster whose very existence must ever be revolting to right-minded persons with brains of honest gray and white. But the solemn promise to Dr. Rapperschwyll sealed his lips.

A trifling incident suddenly opened his eyes to the alarming character of the situation, and filled his heart with a new horror.

One evening, a few days before the date designated for the departure of the American party from Havre for home, Fisher happened to enter the private parlor which was, by common consent, the headquarters of his set. At first he thought that the room was unoccupied. Soon he perceived, in the recess of a window, and partly obscured by the drapery of the curtain, the forms of the Baron Savitch and Miss Ward of Portland. They did not observe his entrance. Miss Ward's hand was in the Baron's hand, and she was looking up into his handsome face with an expression which Fisher could not misinterpret.

Fisher coughed, and going to another window, pretended to be interested in affairs on the Boulevard. The couple emerged from the recess. Miss Ward's face was ruddy with confusion, and she immediately withdrew. Not a sign of embarrassment was visible on the Baron's countenance. He greeted Fisher with perfect self-possession, and be-

gan to talk of the great balloon in the Place du Carrousel.

Fisher pitied but could not blame the young lady. He believed her still loyal at heart to her New York engagement. He knew that her loyalty could not be shaken by the blandishments of any man on earth. He recognized the fact that she was under the spell of a power more than human. Yet what would be the outcome? He could not tell her all; his promise bound him. It would be useless to appeal to the generosity of the Baron; no human sentiments governed his exorable purposes. Must the affair drift on while he stood tied and helpless? Must this charming and innocent girl be sacrificed to the transient whim of an automaton? Allowing that the Baron's intentions were of the most honorable character, was the situation any less horrible? Marry a Machine! His own loyalty to his friend in New York, his regard for Miss Ward, alike loudly called on him to act with promptness.

And, apart from all private interest, did he not owe a plain duty to society, to the liberties of the world? Was Savitch to be permitted to proceed in the career laid out for him by his creator, Dr. Rapperschwyll? He (Fisher) was the only man in the world in a position to thwart the ambitious programme. Was there ever greater need of a Brutus?

Between doubts and fears, the last days of Fisher's stay in Paris were wretched beyond description. On the morning of the steamer day he had almost made up his mind to act.

The train for Havre departed at noon, and at eleven o'clock the Baron Savitch made his appearance at the Hotel Splendide to bid farewell to his American friends. Fisher watched Miss Ward closely. There was a constraint in her manner which fortified his resolution. The Baron incidentally remarked that he should make it his duty and pleasure to visit America within a very few months, and that he hoped then to renew the acquaintances now interrupted. As Savitch spoke, Fisher observed that his eyes met Miss Ward's, while the slightest possible blush colored her cheeks. Fisher knew that the case was desperate, and demanded a desperate remedy.

He now joined the ladies of the party in urging the Baron to join them in the hasty lunch that was to precede the drive to the station. Savitch gladly accepted the cordial invitation. Wine he politely but firmly declined, pleading the absolute prohibition of his physician. Fisher left the room for an instant, and returned with the black bottle which had figured in the Baden episode.

"The Baron," he said, "has already expressed his approval of the noblest of our American products, and he knows that this beverage has good medical endorsement." So saying, he poured the remaining contents of the Kentucky bottle into a glass, and presented it to the Russian.

Savitch hesitated. His previous experience with the nectar was at the same time a temptation and a warning, yet he did not wish to seem discourte-

ous. A chance remark from Miss Ward decided him.

"The Baron," she said, with a smile, "will certainly not refuse to wish us *bon voyage* in the American fashion."

Savitch drained the glass and the conversation turned to other matters. The carriages were already below. The parting compliments were being made, when Savitch suddenly pressed his hands to his forehead and clutched at the back of a chair. The ladies gathered around him in alarm.

"It is nothing," he said faintly ; "a temporary dizziness."

"There is no time to be lost," said Fisher, pressing forward. "The train leaves in twenty minutes. Get ready at once, and I will meanwhile attend to our friend."

Fisher hurriedly led the Baron to his own bedroom. Savitch fell back upon the bed. The Baden symptoms repeated themselves. In two minutes the Russian was unconscious.

Fisher looked at his watch. He had three minutes to spare. He turned the key in the lock of the door and touched the knob of the electric annunciator.

Then, gaining the mastery of his nerves by one supreme effort for self-control, Fisher pulled the deceptive wig and the black skull-cap from the Baron's head. "Heaven forgive me if I am making a fearful mistake!" he thought. But I believe it to be best for ourselves and for the world." Rapidly, but with a steady hand, he unscrewed the silver dome.

The Mechanism lay exposed before his eyes. The Baron groaned. Ruthlessly Fisher tore out the wondrous machine. He had no time and no inclination to examine it. He caught up a newspaper and hastily enfolded it. He thrust the bundle into his open travelling-bag. Then he screwed the silver top firmly upon the Baron's head, and replaced the skull-cap and the wig.

All this was done before the servant answered the bell. "The Baron Savitch is ill," said Fisher to the attendant, when he came. "There is no cause for alarm. Send at once to the Hotel de l'Athénée for his valet, Auguste." In twenty seconds Fisher was in a cab, whirling toward the Station St. Lazare.

When the steamship Pereire was well out at sea, with Ushant five hundred miles in her wake, and countless fathoms of water beneath her keel, Fisher took a newspaper parcel from his travelling-bag. His teeth were firm set and his lips rigid. He carried the heavy parcel to the side of the ship and dropped it into the Atlantic. It made a little eddy in the smooth water, and sank out of sight. Fisher fancied that he heard a wild, despairing cry, and put his hands to his ears to shut out the sound. A gull came circling over the steamer—the cry may have been the gull's.

Fisher felt a light touch upon his arm. He turned quickly around. Miss Ward was standing at his side, close to the rail.

"Bless me, how white you are!" she said. "What in the world have you been doing?"

"I have been preserving the liberties of two continents," slowly replied Fisher, "and perhaps saving your own peace of mind."

"Indeed!" said she; "and how have you done that?"

"I have done it," was Fisher's grave answer, "by throwing overboard the Baron Savitch."

Miss Ward burst into a ringing laugh. "You are sometimes too droll, Mr. Fisher," she said.

YOUNG MOLL'S PEEVY.

BY C. A. STEPHENS.

VILLATE'S "drive" of logs had jammed at the foot of Red Rapids in the very throat of the main "pitch," where the Aux Lièvres falls over the ledges into the "glut-hole" fifty feet below. Named "glut-hole" by the river-men; for lumber falling in here will sometimes circle a month, unless poled out. The waters whirl and are drawn down with a peculiar sinuous motion. Bodies going over are long engulfed, and sometimes never reappear, for the basin is of great depth and there are caverns under water beneath the shelving ledges, such as the drivers call *cachots d'enfer*, and have invested with a superstitious character, as the abode of evil spirits of the flood—a thing not greatly to be wondered at; for a wilder locality could hardly be cited, its rugged cliffs of red sandstone, hung with enormous lichens,

like sides of leather, and overhung from high above with shaggy black spruces.

There were seven and a-half million feet of lumber in Villate's drive that spring. Every stick of it went into the great jam above the glut-hole. The rough fortunes of youth made me an eye-witness of the scene. A wilder spectacle I never saw throughout the lumbering region during a space of eight years. The gates of the dams at the foot of all the lakes were up ; the volume of water was immense. Rocks, which in summer stand twenty feet out of the rapids, were now under water. The torrent came pouring down the long incline, black and swift as an arrow, and went over into the pool at one thunderous plunge, throwing up a vast column of mist. Two ledges only, situated in the very throat of the "pitch," showed above water. These rocks the lumbering company had designed to blast out the previous autumn, but had been prevented by heavy rains. They then stood twenty-seven feet out of water. Now their crests are barely exposed, and the flood washes over them in its mighty rhythm-motion. In the rapids the whole stream is compressed to a width of a little more than seventy yards.

A light jam had formed that morning at a place the drivers called a *tournant d'eau*, about a mile above. This was broken by getting a haul on it from the shore with a dog-warp. Thereby several thousand logs were liberated at once, and went down together into the rapids. The older drivers

exclaimed that it would make mischief when it started ; but nothing could be done ; it broke and went out with a rush. We, who were ahead, ran on down the ledges to see it go through the falls, and we had to run fast to keep up. The instant the logs entered the rapids they left us behind. We could see them going down, however, end over end, and hear them "boom" against the sunken rocks. Turtlotte and a Welshman named Finfrock were ahead. I heard Turtlotte call out in French that the logs were jamming, and saw the butt ends of great sticks fly up, glittering, out of the water. The logs had struck and hung on one of the centre rocks, and on the shelving ledges upon the east side. The ends of three large sticks, three or four feet across, stood out fifteen feet or more. We ran on, clambering from crag to crag, till we came to a point looking down on the glut, sixty feet beneath ; and that was about near enough, for the ends of the logs flew up almost on a level with our eyes, as they went over, and the spray drenched our faces. The ledges under our feet trembled as if an earthquake were shaking them, and not a word could be heard, even when shouted in the ear. The combined noises were louder than thunder, heavier, deeper. It was a warm forenoon, and the sun shone into the rock dazzlingly bright, making a vivid rainbow. It was the hottest, maddest chasm that can well be imagined ; and to see that brilliant rainbow hanging there so still and motionless amidst all that uproar, gave one a queer sensation.

Old man Villate himself, with his red cap over his ears, came puffing down, shouting at the top of his lungs. We could see his lips fly. The hitch was betwixt the shelving ledges on the east side and one of the mid-channel rocks. It was not one log that had caught, else the weight of the water would have broken it out. It appeared that two large sticks had come down with the ends lying across each other, and a third log, perhaps several logs, overlying these. When the current sucked them through the rapid, between the centre rock and the shore ledges, the outward ends of the crossed logs struck on both sides. Instantly the current and the momentum of the overlying logs thrust the submerged ends of the cross among the rocks on the bottom of the channel, and the momentarily increasing weight of logs held them there—this at least was the theory at the time. When first we got down there, however, there were more than a thousand logs in the glut; and the ends stood up like a porcupine's quills, at every conceivable angle. The obstructing logs in the throat of the fall bore the pressure rather lengthwise than across the fibre. These sticks were of yellow spruce, fifty feet long, and fully three feet through. Such logs, when green, will bear an enormous strain. From the way the exposed ends sprang we knew they were buckling like steel rods, yet they held pertinaciously.

The river above was covered with logs. Scores came shooting down every minute, striking into

the jam like arrows. The most of these stuck in it. Some few went clean over it, or through it, for the first ten minutes, into the hole below. Logs would glance from the slippery black rocks and go a hundred feet clear of the water, such was the strength of the rapid. I saw sticks of free pine—where they struck the rocks one half on—go in halves from end to end like split-beans—logs forty and fifty feet long; yet the owners never cease to wonder how the lumber gets so badly “broomed up;” for the ends of the logs resemble nothing so much as a paint-brush.

The warps were brought, and Villate called for volunteers to go down, or rather be let down, the ledges and prize off the shore ends of the jammed logs with “peevies.” There were plenty of bold fellows; but every man hesitated. Murmurs of “*certain mort*,” “*sur mort*,” “*porte du tombeau*,” “*porte d’enfer*,” arose and were repeated.

“It’s a hard world, but I wants to tarry in it a spell longer, boss!” said one grizzled old Yankee from the Maine rivers, with a sage shake of his long head. We all knew that when the jam started it would go through like an avalanche. Whoever was down there would have to go with it—into the glut-hole.

In an hour the jam had grown enormously. For a hundred rods up the rapid the channel was full of lumber, “churning” and battering itself. The mass had swayed off to the west bank and was piling up against the ledges on the opposite side.

The mighty pressure of the torrent kept rolling the logs, one over the other, till the top of the pile was in places thirty or forty feet out of the water. The bottom logs were wedged into the bed of the stream. The flood, thus dammed and held back, rose higher and higher, rushing through and among the mass with a strange hollow roar which changed the note of the fall. Where it hung in the throat of the pitch, the mass kept rising and falling with the peculiar rhythmic motion of the water. We expected each moment to see it break out and go down; but the tough spruce logs held.

By noon, all the crew had come up. The jam filled the whole river for a third of a mile back from the fall, so completely that during the afternoon the west bank gangs crossed on it to the east side. We lighted our fires on the ledges; and as the evening advanced it was a picturesque sight—a hundred and fifty red-shirted drivers camping there and sitting in messes about their coarse fare.

All the next day we worked with the warps. Nooses were dropped over the upright ends of the logs at the foot of the jam, and the whole gang was set to pull on them. Later in the day, a heavy capstan was rigged. The hawsers broke like twine. It was impossible to start a log, so tremendous was the weight of water and lumber combined.

Next day, the jam was mined with powder placed in water-tight molasses-casks and connected with fire at the top of the ledges by means of tarred fuses. The blasts blew out splinters freely,

but failed to break or dislodge the large sticks. Villate fumed and sweated. Unless the drive went down to market, not a dollar would be paid to one of us; so he declared. "If you want your pay, break the jam, was his constant exhortation, enforced by vigorous curses; and, indeed, we had been hired on these terms; wages to be paid when the drive reached Montreal—not before. This is a common rule, or used to be; the men have thus a strong interest in the driving.

A plan was mooted among the messes that following night, to cut out the front logs. The same scheme has been often put in execution. It was argued that by stretching a warping-line across the rapids, from cliff to cliff, directly over the foot of the jam, a man might be lowered on it, with his axe, and cut away the logs. A large "basket"—so it was talked—might be swung on the cable. By slackening the line the axe-man could be lowered to the logs; and the instant the sticks cracked under the strokes, he could leap to the "basket" and be pulled out of harm's way, and let the jam go through under him. The idea gained favor. The following morning the end of one of the seven hundred foot lines was taken across on the jam to the ledges on the west bank. Fifty men went over with it, to handle it. With a hundred men there was no difficulty in lowering and raising it at will. When drawn taut, it hung sixty feet above the foot of the jam. One of the Indian drivers, named Lahmunt, had been at work weaving a "basket"

of ash strip; and as soon as this novel carriage was finished and slung on the cable, the project was ready for trial. While the project was being talked over, several of the drivers had declared themselves willing to undertake the feat; but now that the basket was slung, and after seeing it draw out over the abyss, they were less disposed to proffer their services. It needed strong nerves and a stout heart to gaze into that foaming gulf and not turn dizzy.

There was among us a youngster whom the old drivers called "Young Moll's Peevy." Young Moll was a half-breed (French and Indian) girl, or rather woman at this time, of thirty or thirty-three, and the mother of this boy. Some of the drivers said that his rightful patronymic was Skelly; but this was a rather obscure matter.

She lived at one of those little half-savage villages such as are only to be found in the backwoods of Canada; and her name was a far too commonly spoken one with the drivers, though not more so than many another. Society in these parts had not taken high orders. Nature had her own way pretty much; they deemed it little sin. Even the omnipresent Romish priest has somehow failed to get much control over the average river-driver, always too much a nomad to feel the continued influence of local sanctuaries.

The young woman realized the prevailing ideal of beauty; not a very refined one, perhaps; but the drivers deemed her fair.

"The Peevy," as he was half-humorously christened, must have been nearly or quite nineteen. The name was said to have come to him one day in boyhood, when a "peevy" was dropped off a glut into ten or a dozen feet of water. Several of the drivers were trying to hook it up, but kept missing it. The boy, then eleven or twelve years old, had come along unobserved. Presently, and without saying a word, he dropped off the logs, brought up the peevy, and ran away, dripping. The men laughed, and not knowing his name, called him "the peevy-boy." Afterward, when they had found out his mother, they named the urchin "Young Moll's Peevy." This *sobriquet* clung to him even after he had reached manhood and worked with the gang, particularly among the older men who remembered the circumstance. But his mother called him Lotte. A stranger would not easily have believed him the child of the fresh young person who had cared for him; for he was unusually stalwart and bronzed by exposure. Seen together, they rather resembled lad and lass. I thought so, at least, when first I saw her, coming to fetch him dry feeting and a clean shirt. She had walked twenty miles to bring them, through the woods, following our trail. And the way she kissed the young man, aside, was, or looked to be, rather lover-like than maternal. Afterward, on several similar occasions, I was much struck by the *genre* picture they made; the youth had the great black eyes and black curling hair of his mother. The

drivers used to chaff the fellow unceasingly about Young Moll and the care she took of him, all of which he bore silently, with a troubled, resentful eye; though, otherwise, a great, noble-hearted boy, generous, and inclined to jollity. Really, the rough fellows thought the more of the young woman for this motherly affection and wealth of care for her boy. It was in their uncultured faces, all the while their tongues belied them.

The "basket" was slung and ready. The gang on the other side were gesticulating, with random tugs at the line. There was something whimsical in the way the proposers of the project shrank the one behind the other, with assumed bravado and covert glances at each other's faces.

"I shall have to go myself!" Villate exclaimed, with his characteristic French oath, "I will go myself, fat as I am!" when, rather bashfully, as if afraid of giving offense, young Lotte said he would go "if no better man wanted the job." There were at first muttered "*non-nons*" of dissuasion in the crowd, but nobody claimed the "job," and Villate was but too glad to get a man to go. In a moment the young man had stripped to his shirt and red drawers, taken his axe and stepped to the basket, but it was found to be insecurely attached; and afterward several better modes of handling the line were suggested, in all causing a delay of an hour or two.

And now, as if the birds of spring, just flitting past, had carried the word, or some presentiment of

evil had found its way to the Peevy's mother, she inopportunately made her appearance. Rad Cates privately touched my elbow and nodded back, up the bank. I then saw young Moll standing partly in the cover of a shrub fir, a hundred yards off, intently watching the gang and the extended warp.

Several of the men saw her, but did not look or notice her after the first glance. "Parbleu! a pity she's here!" one said, and they closed in about Lotte to prevent his seeing her. But the woman soon came nearer, going partly around the crowd, keeping aloof. She had a new plaid shawl, gayly colored, pinned closely about her neck, and her long, black, Indian-like curls showed beneath a beaded scarlet hood. There was an intently anxious look in her eyes; she appeared worn and tired.

"The Peevy" was much too tall a man to be shut up in the crowd. Presently he espied her, and his eye fell. After a time he casually, as it were, made his way back to her. None of us heard what was said. The most instinctively kept their eyes to themselves. The gang on the other side was staring across the chasm. Villate ripped out an oath, and I saw Lotte push the girl aside so roughly that she caught at a shrub to save herself. He walked straight to the brink of the cliff.

"Je suis ici," said he. I never saw him look so manly. We knew his eye was quick and his hand sure. I had little doubt that he would cut the front logs and come up safe. We did not know what the danger was till afterward. He stood up-

right in the "basket," with one hand on the hawser, to steady himself, and his axe in the other.

At a signal the gang on the west side straightened the line. We paid it out slowly. They drew him out from the brink of the ledge, till the basket was directly over the centre rock. Then gradually we slackened it, and let him down foot by foot, down under the rainbow, where the hot, mad mist flew up in fierce gusts, bearing the strong odor of crushed spruce fibre. He seemed to bear the deafening roar without confusion, and glanced about him quite coolly, as it looked.

Our attention was given closely to his signals and to our task, yet I saw Young Moll coming forward, step by step, as the "basket" went deeper and deeper into the gorge, her eyes riveted on it. She was very pale, and her hands were tightly clenched. The drivers cast ominous glances at her.

"I don't half like the looks of the jade!" I heard muttered, and I think the sight of her filled every one with a sense of foreboding.

As soon as the basket was down to the logs we saw him step out upon them, and thence to the rock. From moment to moment the mist hid him, and transient jets of water, from betwixt the logs, squirted high over his head. Guardedly he planted one boot, shod with the sharp corks, upon one of the large front logs—the one he judged it best to cut away first; the other foot rested on the rock. The "basket" he had placed at his back. We were holding it steady from both banks, ready to pull it

up when signaled. Before and beneath him raged the cataract. We saw him raise his axe and strike it into the log. The bright steel flashed in the narrow chasm. At the fourth stroke the great log cracked. He threw the axe and clutched the basket. A mighty crash rang up. The jam had started—was moving—going down—madly splintering—thundering into the glut-hole! The wet splinters all along the rapids went up a hundred feet in air. On both sides the gangs were running backward, hoisting the “basket.” It rose twenty feet a second! A hundred and fifty strong men pulled with might and main! As he rose he waved his hand to us.

Ah, God! we were too slow! It was all done in a trice. One great stick, ending over like a fagot, barely missed the basket. Another longer log, whirling up, struck the warp farther out, and hurled him down with it! The cable was torn from our hands! Gone like a flash, into the gulf below! From the one great rough human heart on either bank a groan of pity blended with the roar. “Too d——n bad!” they cried out, in all sincerity, and stood staring.

Then all eyes turned toward the poor fellow’s mother. She had thrown up her hands when the timber swept him down, as if to shut out the sight, then dropped them on a sudden, with a moan.

“Catch her!” some one shouted. Half-a-dozen standing nearest sprang forward—for she was standing on the very verge of the rocks. Her eyes had fallen on old man Villate. They were like the eyes

of one in some mortal agony. The blotched and bloated old rum-butt turned his face aside and downward, and thrust out his hands as if to fight off flame. For their lives the men durst not lay hold of her. She seemed to waver in soul betwixt grief and fury.

A moment after, the men gave a loud shout! She was gone from where she had stood, and the echo of a smothered shriek—tribute of a woman's heart to death—came to our ears. We sprang to look over. There was a glimpse of the bright shawl whirled amid the foam.

“Did she fall?” some one cried out.

“Throwed herself down!” said those who saw it.

We never found trace of either of them. But the jam went out, to the last log. Two hours later the gangs were following the drive down the stream—on to Montreal! But the men had turned sullen. Scarce a laugh or a cheery shout was heard for three days.

MANMAT'HA.

BY CHARLES DE KAY.

L

ONE day the breeze was talking of grand and simple things in the pines that look across the lower bay at Sandy Hook. The great water spaces were a delicious blue, dotted with the white tops of crushed waves; to the left, Coney Island lay mapped out in bleached surfaces, while beyond and seaward, from the purple sleeve formed by the hills of the Navesink, the Hook ran a brown finger eastward. A hawk which nests among the steep inclines of Todt Hill shot out from a neighboring ravine and hung motionless, but never quiet, in the middle distance.

Birds and beasts will make closer approach to a person clothed in dun-colored garments; therefore it was not odd that the hawk should not notice

my presence on the pine needles near the crest of the hill. After steering without visible rustle of a feather through the lake of air before me, he stooped all at once, grasped a hedge-sparrow that had been shaking the top of a bush far down the slope, and, rising, bore it to the low branch of a pine not far from my resting-place.

The sun had fallen in a Titanic tragedy of color beyond Prince's Bay. The fierce bird, leisurely occupied in tearing to pieces the little twitterer, was a suitable accompaniment to the bloody drama in the clouds. Watching keenly, I gradually began to picture to myself the sensation of walking unseen to the murderous fowl and suddenly clasping his smooth back with both hands. How startled he would be! But in truth the thought was only a continuation of another that had been floating through my mind while the hawk was wheeling. Unconsciously I had been mumbling to myself from the Nibelungen,—

“ About the tameless dwarf-kin I have heard it said,
They dwell in hollow mountains ; for safety are arrayed
In what is termed a tarn-kap, of wondrous quality ;
Who hath it on his body preserved is said to be
From cuttings and from thrustings ; of him is none aware
When he therein is clothèd. Both see can he, and hear
According as he wishes, yet no one him perceives.”

The magic cloak, the tarn-kap, I reasoned, with my eyes on the cruel bird, was only a symbol after all, something physical to make real that invisi-

bility which we cannot readily conceive. But suddenly—could my wish have been felt?—the hawk gave a hoarse croak of fright, dropped his prey, and, springing heavily into the air, was gone.

He had not looked at me, he had not seen or heard me, nor could I see, far or near, the slightest cause for his terror. But—I heard ! Sh-sh-sh—I was aware of a light step in the needles under the tree he had left. Straining my eyes to watch the ground, surely, surely, in a line passing close to my couch, the needles and thin grass were pressed down, as if by a weight applied at even distances ! I had remained motionless as a figure of stone, but when a tuft of hepatica, blooming late where the shade was deepest, fell crushed near my hand, I reached out. As luck would have it I was too conscious, too much ashamed at my own folly to act decisively. I did not grasp, I reached out—and touched a living thing.

On such occasions there comes at first the exuberance of joy ; then doubt. I had long debated the possibility of invisibles. As far back as I can remember, elfin tales produced an awful wonderment upon my imagination. On long May nights have I not often stolen from the house to watch for elves ? A moon after a rain was to my thinking the best for such mysterious beings, when everything was hazy with an imperceptible mist, when the dogwoods had flooded the landscape with sheets of reflected white, and somebody was drawing one veil after another slowly past a golden shield in

the sky. On such nights, more than once, a boy might have been seen creeping on tiptoe through the open woods, over the great clearing, to the hill-top, where, if anywhere, brownies must play. But none did he espy, nor did the chance-flung cap ever fall upon his eager, outstretched hands. And if in later years the subject still fascinated me, it made me feel what the grown man realizes always more clearly, that fables and fairy tales rest on a solid groundwork of fact. Why, when so many other legends have been verified, should this universal tradition of vanishers and invisibles prove entirely false?

It occurs to one very soon that animal life does exist of so transparent a texture that to all intents and purposes it is invisible. The spawn of frogs, the larvæ of certain fresh-water insects, many marine animals, are of so clear a tissue that they are seen with difficulty. In the tropics a particular inhabitant of smooth seas is as invisible as a piece of glass, and can be detected only in the love season by the color which then mingles in its eyes. On reflection a thousand instances arise of assimilation of animal life to their surroundings, of mimicry of nature with a view to safety. Why, then, by survival of the most transparent, should not some invisible life of a high grade hold a secure position on the earth?

Pondering thus, I had been startled not a little by coming now and again on facts that seemed to bear this out. Strange tracks through untrodden

grass suggested footsteps of the unseen. Flattened spaces of peculiar shape in the standing rye, where human beings could not have intruded, looked marvellously like human visitation. Or I lay concealed and watched the crows in a road-side field. What was it caused them to look up suddenly and flap away on sooty-fringed wings? No bird, beast, or man came. Then the rats, scampering about under a dock like so many gaunt Virginia swine : all at once came a flurry of whisking tails, and they were off ! Yet I had not stirred, nor did anything move on the dock above. Nevertheless all seemed to realize a common danger, a noise of some kind,—perhaps a step? Again, you sit like a block while a snake basks unconscious in the sun, and may watch many hours without event ; but sometimes it happens that he raises his head, quivers for an instant his double tongue, and slides off the stump into a bush. At such times put your ear to the earth. Do you not distinguish—or is it all imagination—a sound, a brushing?

It availed me little, then, that I should have considered the subject, or have even gone the length of debating how a man might attain invisibility. Now that I had a tangible proof of the existence of such beings, I was crushed by misgivings. Like many a man before the supposed impossible, I questioned my own sanity. As to the impression, however, the object I had touched or fancied I had touched was at once hard and soft, smooth and rough ; I recalled it as each of these in turn, for it

was moving, and at the moment of contact bounded away as if at the shock of a galvanic current. To my excited mind the dusky woods were becoming oppressive, and so, like the hawk, but slowly and pondering, I betook myself home.

Who that has walked or run through autumn woods at night has not sometimes looked curiously over his shoulder at the sound of following steps? It always proves to be dry leaves whirled after you in your rapid course ; but this evening my gait was slow, and the leaves of last year were hard to find ; nor could I account, except on the ground of nervous illusion, for the pattering that followed in my rear. Yet there it was, albeit so gentle that had I not stretched every sense to the utmost I am confident no sound would have penetrated to my consciousness. And it was evident that I was thoroughly imposed upon by it, for when the small, irregular pond was reached, which, with a cypress-scattered hillock, occupies the highest point of the main hill to the westward, I halted a moment and considered. How, thought I, will this unseen attendant cross a piece of water ? Throwing off my shoes I waded over a shallow arm of the pond, and sat down to watch. Presently in the twilight two wedges of ruffled water were discerned advancing swiftly across the surface, — just such tracks as serpents make in swimming, — a light touch was heard on the bank, and all was still. But then a sudden disgust, unreasoning and childish, mastered me completely ; a wave of doubt greater than before

filled me with disdain of my own imbecility, and I hastened through the orchard to my home, and flung myself into an arm-chair near the window.

The place I had selected long ago as a quiet refuge was a low veranda farm-house, hidden away from north winds under the crest of a hill, and crept over by many rods of honey-suckle. Events had so affected me that I considered nothing left in life but an alternation of hard work and of utter retreat from humanity, and had disposed me favorably toward the ancient apple orchard, and the meagre vegetable and flower garden, which alone remained of a former farm. The barns, the plowed lands, and the fences had disappeared. Only a heavy stone wall with flagged top, which protected the garden from the road, reminded one of a former powerful owner. From the veranda no house was visible; the eye had to travel many miles across the flat lower country to the bay before the distant ships recalled a busy world.

Here, beside myself, lived no one save Pachel, a woman whose Indian origin made it impossible to guess her age. Although she claimed for herself the purest descent from an Indian tribe of a head-land a hundred miles to the eastward, and although her features were not without strong marks of her claim, yet in strict truth she was so much mixed with African blood that with most persons she would pass for a negress. Rachel had a talent for cooking breakfasts and suppers from little apparent supply; she was taciturn to speechlessness, hence

our intercourse was never marred by discord ; and while her box was kept supplied with strong tobacco, a slender meal of some kind was never wanting ; and it was served in silence.

For two years Rachel and I had lived in this silent, limited partnership. My home was cool and soundless as the grave, a place in which the mind could stretch its shriveled wings, where everything could be done mechanically and without fear of a sudden jar into disagreeable reality. When of an afternoon I stepped from the hurrying world into the first quiet woods on the way to my home, a great door swung to behind me and another life began, in which Rachel's figure and swarthy, heavy-featured face had long ceased to interfere with my meditation.

This night, however, before the meal was served, the kitchen door opened and my housekeeper's inscrutable dull eyes rolled around the walls of the room ; then it closed. What had happened ? Why on this night had Rachel noticed my arrival ? At supper I broke our unspoken compact and addressed her.

"Rachel, what made you look in just now ? Has anything happened ?"

The woman made no reply, yet there was evidence in her manner that she was groping for an answer. Presently to a second demand she made a reply that startled me :—

"Heard two of you."

So, another ear had detected the steps as well as

my own ! Then the being, whatever it was, must be in the room, possibly at my elbow ; or, seated perchance on that chair before me, was regarding me steadfastly ! Except for the excitement bred of a new sensation, it was not a pleasant thought ; nevertheless, I pulled a second chair to the table and filled a second plate with food ; then, with my eyes fixed on the plate, continued the meal. It was all in vain. Nothing further was seen or heard.

This was my first definite encounter with that unseen which I would have called a spirit had I been a spiritualist. But I could not force myself to the gross materialism of calling this invisible existence a spirit, for tangibility was a quality I could not associate with pure spirit, and I had touched it.

Having once followed me, it seemed thenceforth to take up quarters in my house, at least for the evening and morning hours of the day, and strange as it was, I soon learned to regard the presence of a third person as an established fact ; indeed, I came to believe that in some instances a faint breathing might be detected. Nevertheless I would not leave anything to the possibilities of imagination, but was always experimenting, with a view to prove still more clearly that there was no illusion possible. To this end a brass and steel rod, fitted between the floor and a projection from the wall, was connected with an indicator which moved in a large arc when the slightest touch shook the floor. By this means my ears were reinforced by sight.

I also began systematically to conceal from the

unknown guest the fact that I suspected its presence ; but at last the point was reached where, to protect my own reason, it must be settled whether it was all a series of illusions or a sober truth.

For by dint of thought a scheme had been perfected, and on a Sunday morning, when as usual Rachel had disappeared, no man has ever known whither ; when, according to its custom, the strange visitant had also, to all appearance, withdrawn,—on a Sunday morning I hastened to put my plan in action. On the main floor in the rear of the house was a chamber, into which the sounds had sometimes intruded, which was small, bare, and lighted by one deep window looking directly out on the orchard. This window I had grated strongly with heavy wire on the outside, where the orchard hill rose steeply from the house ; and over against the window, in the wall between chamber and dining-room, was a high closet, in which I had stored a strong net, such as fishermen use for their seines. Fastening stout wires to the ceiling from one end of the room to the other, to be used for slides, and rigging several small blocks above the window and near the floor, I stretched the necessary ropes from closet to blocks and back again, laid everything ready for instant use, cleared the room of furniture, and awaited events.

There was no fear of interruption from Rachel, for during the years we had lived together I had never seen her on a Sabbath. Every Monday she was at her post, although laboring under some ex-

citement, which showed itself in mutterings and a certain wild gesture that I had learned to attach no importance to. There was no fear that I should not have the invisible to myself.

Evening came to close a sultry day with growls of distant thunder and sudden flares of light behind Navesink Hills; the bushes drooped languidly; only the tree-toads were clamorous, and their jubilee was a mournful one on every side. I was sitting by the west window with my head on my breast, and, now that the crisis had come, almost apathetic to the presence itself, when its approach took place. It seemed to stop near my chair, as if it regarded me closely. I had been before in singular predicaments, but it seemed to me this was the most trying. I felt that I must look very pale, but with an affectation of indifference I arose, walked across the room and entered the bed-chamber. In a moment I understood that the unseen had likewise passed the sill and had entered the room; then I slammed the door, locked it, and put the key in my pocket.

Everything had been made ready to cope with a material and not a supernatural being; still it was purely a venture, and at no previous time had there seemed so little hope of success. Nevertheless not a moment was lost in hauling out the net and placing it in position across the room so that it hung straight, filling the space between wall and wall, and ceiling and floor. Then I began to draw it down the room by means of the ropes, and on the axis of the chamber, so that its edges passed smooth-

ly along ceiling, walls, and floor. The anxious moment was at hand.

All the running gear had to be worked evenly ; at the same time every nerve was strained in order to detect the slightest bulge in the upright net, should it come in contact with a tangible body.

Until three quarters of the room had been sifted nothing occurred. Then I saw the edge against the left-hand wall carefully drawn aside ; to spring forward and close the opening was the instinctive work of a second. Terror combining with a fierce delight lent me an extraordinary force ; I drew with convulsive power on the ropes. Every moment an invisible hand seemed to lift the net at some point, but each attempt was luckily frustrated. At last the movements ceased, and I drew the net flat against the farther wall. With feverish haste my hand travelled over its entire surface ; the net was scanned in profile for the impression of a body, but there was none. The game had either escaped or withdrawn into the deep window-seat.

Now came a moment for breath, and for reflection. Again the cynical cloud of doubt folded me in. Dupe of my own morbid imagination, I should stand convicted of monomania in the eyes of any reasonable being who should see my actions. Then it was best, was it not ? to tear the net away ; or should I deliberately pursue to the utmost a plan begun ? Never before had I so clearly felt a dual existence urging to opposite courses of action, as if the body's instinct commanded an advance, while the mind, as-

sailing the whole proceeding with ridicule, was for giving up the game. But for all that it was a good sign that I began to feel a slight awe at the near possibility of a discovery. For I retreated to the door, unlocked it, and stood irresolute; then returned again to the window, without strength to come to a decision.

But while I pondered, a low, chuckling noise startled me, and Rachel stood by my side, erect and with features full of energy, her dull eyes blazing, and her short straight hair tossed about; in her hand she brandished with exultation a carved rod hung with bright claws and shells, with lappets of fur and hair; and at her and it I gazed with speechless amazement. Had she too gone mad? She took a few steps, as if in a rude dance, and shook the stick, and while her eyes glared into mine she nodded her head to the time.

“Bad spirit!” she muttered. “I have known, I have heard. But this is strong Wabeno.”

As she shook the talisman, which clinked and rattled like the toy of a devil, I snatched the medicine stick from her hand and motioned her to the door. Thither she retreated, muttering words of an unknown tongue, and when it closed upon her I flung the stick angrily on the floor. But hope had come, and decision as well, although from a despised quarter; I was resolved to finish the undertaking at all hazards.

The wild flames of the distant storm still lighted everything at intervals with an intensity now greater

and now less. When the sheet lightning flashed strong, the square cage formed by the wire outside the window-seat and the fish-net within stood out clear against the northern sky. With dilated pupils I began to examine the inclosed cube of air. During one particularly long and vivid flash,—there, in that corner, was there not a heap, a translucent shape, indistinguishable in quality or form? It was enough. Swiftly as wild beasts when they spring, I raised the net, leaped into the window, and grasped toward the corner where I thought I saw the mass.

II.

A THRILL runs through the nerves of an entomologist when he puts his hand on a specimen unknown, undescribed. The hunter trembles when he espies in the thicket the royal hart whose existence has been called a fable. My emotion was all of this, intensified; nearer, perhaps, to the feeling of the elected mortal who has discovered a new continent. For I had discovered a new world.

Had I not cause for exultation? I sat on the window-seat in the alternate light and darkness, with one hand clenched, the other arm curved in the air; my left held fast a slender wrist, while my right was cast about a pair of delicate shoulders; the in-

visible but tangible figure was crouched away into the smallest space in the corner of the window.

With awe I now realized that my capture was a woman. The delicate moulding of the shoulders and hand was proof enough, but I also felt on my arm a light flood of the silkiest hair. This was a shock to one who had lived apart from women for several years, and had good cause to expect nothing but disaster from their influence. For a moment the impulse was strong to release the captive ; luckily reason prevailed, and I tightened my grip on the frail prize, whose frame was shaken with sobs and whose bearing denoted the most abject despair. I gave many timid reassurances by word and hand before the sobs came slower and fear began to loose its hold. As she raised her head I took occasion to pass my right hand lightly over her face. Rendered sensitive by strong excitement, my palm read her features as the blind read the raised print of their books, and of this at least I was sure : the features were human, straight, the eyes large ; a full chin and a mouth of unspeakable fineness were divined rather than felt by my flying touch ; but I found no trace of tears.

After this I do not know how long we sat. It seemed peaceful and homelike, so that I wondered how it was possible so quickly to forget wonder. A protective warmth toward the creature whose soft breathing came and went slower and slower near my face took a quiet hold on all my senses. At last the gentle head drooped like a tired child's, the deli-

cate shoulders heaved in a long, peaceful sigh, and to my amazement the strange captive fell asleep in my arms.

So while she slept I sat motionless and thinking, thinking. Who was she? whence and of what order of beings? What was her language; how and how long did she live. Was she really alive in our sense of the word, that is, human with the exception of her transparency? and was her shape like that of ordinary mortals, or did she end in some monstrosity like a mermaid? Such were the questions agitating me when interruption came with a knock at the door. My captive awoke and instinctively started away, at the same time giving a low, articulate cry; but I held her firmly, and called to Rachel to bring me a certain relic of slavery which had been brought from the South. I had profited by the discovery my prisoner's awakening furnished: the invisible, I argued, could articulate, then why should she not understand and speak the language of the people among whom she was found? Accordingly a few rapid questions were put to her, which were unanswered. Then I bethought me of a proof that at any rate she understood my words.

"My dear child, it is mere perverseness in you to refuse an answer. I am sure you understand. You are in my power for good or evil, and if you refuse to speak I must consider you worthy of the following treatment: you shall be made an example to the crowd of the reality of invisible life."

Under cruel treatment of this kind, conjecture

became certainty ; I felt her shudder at the idea, and she laid her hand appealingly on mine. This was all I wanted ; speech was now a mere affair of time.

Rachel entered with the rusty handcuffs and handed them to me as if she were conscious and acquiescent in what I did. Not a feature moved, only her eyes shone with inner excitement, in a way I had seen before, while I clasped one link about the unseen wrist.

“ Pardon,” I whispered, “ I do not know you yet. I cannot trust you.”

My daily work ceased. To the few inquiries from the great city Rachel had evasive answers ready ; they were soon over, and I was left to experience the fascination of a beautiful woman whom I had never seen nor could hope ever to see. To be sure, in certain lights and under certain angles of reflection an indistinct outline of a not large, slender girl, which told of pure contours, could be made out, but this was like following the glassy bells that pulsate far down in the waves of northern seas, or the endeavor to catch the real surface of a mirror. Moreover, the slim captive herself resented any attempt to gain acquaintance with her through the eyes. But by degrees the reserve which had taken the place of her terror melted away before gentle and respectful management, and from her own lips I learned much concerning her marvelous race, before the love which presently overwhelmed us put an end to the cooler interests of reason. Thus she astonished me by speaking of her race as widely

spread through almost every inhabited land. They never work or educate their children; their food, which is chiefly in liquid form, is taken from the stores laid up by human beings, and such education as they get is picked up by continual contact with mortals. While their passions would seem to be calm, their only laws relate to the observance of secrecy as to their presence on the earth. To secure this end they meet at stated periods and renew their solemn vows, keep a watch upon each other, and disperse again to a settled or wandering life, but one always dependent on the labors of other beings. This alone would explain the paramount importance attaching to secrecy. And as it is impossible to keep always all hint of their existence from human beings, the penalties for disclosure in the latest days have increased to far greater severity than was used in simpler ages; Manmat'ha could not be brought to tell me the fate which awaited her should it be discovered that she had revealed the great secret of her nation, and the very quiet with which she gave me to understand how vast was the danger impressed me more than the most violent words.

It must have been the pain that the thought of any harm befalling her produced in me, which opened my eyes to the strength of my passion. The time for questions had passed, and the days were long only that we might love. One day glided after another unheeded, while we strolled about the neighboring woody hills to catch a broad glimpse of

the sea from this point, or to examine in that swampy valley the minute wonders of life in plants and insects. At an early stage of our intimacy I had begged to free her wrist from the handcuffs, but she had implored me to continue at least the appearance of slavery, to serve, in case of need, as a partial excuse for violation of her vows. This did not prevent her daily disappearance during the middle hours when the sun was strongest; but these absences only served to give a time for reflection on her beauties and to involve me deeper in the love which now mastered all my thoughts. There was one subject which was long in broaching, but when the necessary courage was summoned, found in Manmat'ha neither objection nor response. She did not comprehend its force. The subject was our marriage.

I had resolved on legal marriage, even if it were necessary to be content with only one witness to the ceremony; that witness could be no one except Rachel. My housekeeper had regarded my preparations and subsequent conduct with a consistent interest and without the least shadow of surprise, and once I remarked that she had caught sight in the twilight of a cup raised without hands; yet no hint fell from her lips to make me feel she was intruding on my affairs. The old blur was in her eyes; the only change in manner was her treatment of me: she regarded me with a kind of awe. And after it had proved abortive to tell her something and not all, because the pleasure of unbosoming

myself of so much love was too great to restrain, I found Rachel not only full of faith, but even surpassing me. She looked upon Manmat'ha as a supernatural being, and plainly invested me with reflected holiness. Some sort of worship she thought due to Manmat'ha, whilst I, as high priest and mortal consort, was entitled to a share; and indeed it was with some difficulty that I persuaded her not to show her faith by uncouth rites. It was as if her life had been a preparation for some such affair as this, and found her enthusiastic, but not astonished.

Our favorite resort was the couch of pine needles looking south from the hillside where we first met. The same hawk, to me the most blessed of birds, would often sail as before in the middle distance, or night-hawks would cut their strange curves in the evening sky. Far out beyond, sea-gulls, mere specks of white, would wheel and plunge into the bay, and at our backs the woodcock, shy enough in any other presence, would whirl fantastically through the woods. All nature was the same, but I was no longer its solitary admirer, for I held in my arms a gentle framework of delight such as no other man before or since has known. She was finer than the finest silk, smoother than the smoothest glass, as if the rays of light, falling on the amazing texture of her skin, found no inequalities from which to reflect.

One evening we had been drawing in long breaths of that delight of which the woods and the great bowl of landscape before us were so full, and I had

been trying to convince Manmat'ha of the importance of the marriage ceremony. "What," I asked with some trouble in my heart, "what will they do to you in case members of your nation discover your position? I do not mean to ask you what you would not tell me before, but what would be their first step?"

"They would imprison me somewhere under a guard," said Manmat'ha. "It would be many months before a tribunal could be collected together, and still longer before I should be judged. What my fate would be then, it is not well to say."

Had I desired, there is little doubt that I could have compelled Manmat'ha to tell me all she knew, for I had found that my will was much the stronger. But what was curiosity compared with the delight of warming her into responsive love? When I now covered her delicious lips with kisses, she returned the pressure, instead of merely suffering me, as at first, with a mild surprise.

"My first love and my last!" I whispered. "They shall not get you from me while I am alive, if they will only give us warning; but if they rob me of you, I shall follow your trace and rescue you, if it be to the bottom of the sea!"

Manmat'ha laughed a pleased laugh. We both started at an echo, a moment after, which seemed to come from the lower hill, below where we sat. There was no echo possible in that direction.

"Manmat'ha!" I whispered, "tell me quickly! Is some one coming?"

She sat apparently unable to speak, but trembling and cold to the touch. I had enough presence of mind to take her up and place her on the other side of the pine, on the ground, and throw my coat carelessly over her. As once before I heard passing steps, but now my more practiced ear caught them distinctly. They came lightly up the steep hill and stopped a moment at a little distance from the tree. With eyes fixed on the ocean I waited in an agony of suspense, assuming the most unconscious air of which I was capable. The steps hesitated only a moment; then they passed lower and lower into the upper wood. For half an hour neither of us moved; at last, taking heart, we stole home.

The event set me thinking. If at any moment we were liable to be discovered and separated, the marriage must take place at once. A consumptive hastens his wedding, a wounded tree is quick to bear, and the fright we had experienced taught me how slight was the thread on which my happiness hung; but Manmat'ha was calm with a maidenly content with little, which in my hasty resentment at even a suspicion of opposition to my plan, I was ready to call indifference.

When we entered I could tell by the unfailing sign of Rachel's eye that she was agitated. Later in the evening I heard her chanting in a discordant undertone an ancient formula of her savage ancestors, and therefore it was with some misgivings that I called and informed her that to-night she was to be the sole witness, by touch, if not by sight, of the

lawful ceremony of wedlock between Manmat'ha and me. She listened in an awestruck silence, and left the room abruptly. As no calling was of any avail, we were compelled to wait her pleasure, which I did with great impatience; and when at last she did return, it was in a shape grotesque almost beyond recognition. Her face and arms were painted white and red in broad bands of coarse pigments; an old embroidered robe fastened over one shoulder, with a close-fitting skirt of buckskin, formed her whole attire. She had put feathers in her hair, and with flaming eyes shook her favorite talisman, the medicine-stick. At one bound she had returned to her ancient state of savagery.

Finding Manmat'ha regarding her with interest, I did not oppose the further proceedings. It struck me that it was not displeasing to my invisible love to receive divine honors even in this wild rite, so I held my peace. She seemed to receive them as her due.

The moon had risen, and gave light to the room through window and open door; flooded by its rays, Rachel moved slowly across the room, uttering in guttural tones a broken chant whose meaning I might have once interpreted, but could not now. On a different occasion I might not have been an entirely unsympathetic observer of the singular sight, but here passion had overcome curiosity. I was an impatient lover. With my arm about Manmat'ha, and filled with earnest emotions, I could not help a feeling of disgust at the monotonous discord

and frantic gestures of the last of a superstitious race.

"This must end, Manmat'ha," I groaned. "I can wait no longer."

As I spoke, the Indian woman grew ungovernable in wild excitement.

"They are on you! They are here!" she screamed.

I felt Manmat'ha stiffen in my arms with deadly terror. Resistless hands dragged us apart and held me absolutely motionless in spite of the deadly agony which filled me, while Manmat'ha's stifled shriek arose from midway across the room.

"Rachel!" I cried. "For God's sake, Rachel, bar the door!"

My cry roused the woman from a stupor; she sprang to the door. I heard the noise of many light feet, the sound of a blow, a heavy fall; then a deep silence came.

Bounding from the spot to which unseen hands up to that moment had pressed me, I sprang from the room and followed into the night. The earth reeled past me in my swift flight, until I suddenly stopped myself to ask where I was going. Where indeed? As well follow the wind. Wild as was the hope that moved me to return, I hurried back again to the house. Rachel alone, clad in her poor Indian finery, the medicine-stick broken by her side, lay stretched out dead in the moonlight.

A DARING FICTION.

BY H. H. BOYESEN.

I.

LEIPSIC is a grim old town with no sentimental associations. Schiller, to be sure, once lived there, but he had a bad time of it, in spite of the slippers and things with which Dora and Minna Stock tried to mollify his existence. The smoke which hangs over the Leipsic chimney-tops is dense, prosaic smoke, which refuses to fashion itself into fairy forms or airy castles in obedience to romantic fancy. Mr. Leonard Grover actually swore (in Latin, of course, for he was too well-mannered to swear in English), that it was the most irritating and pestiferous smoke he had ever encountered since he left his native town of Pittsburgh, where a man, by the way, has a fine chance of studying the effects of smoke both upon linen

and temperament. Mr. Grover was, however, cheerful by nature and refused to be permanently depressed. He was in Leipsic for a practical purpose, and could not afford to indulge in sentimental moods. And yet, in spite of his determination to stick to his science and his laboratory practice, he had unaccountable fits of loneliness, when from sheer despair he went to call upon Professor Bornholm, to whom he had had a letter of introduction and whose family had received him with much cordiality. He would have liked to call upon somebody else occasionally, but the fact was, during the six months he had been at the University he had made no acquaintance outside of his student circle, except the Bornholms. They seemed to like him so much that they refused to share him with anybody else ; they even refrained from introducing him to the friends who might happen to call during his visits. Minchen, who was the artistic daughter and made wax-flowers, usually found some way of disposing of him when inconvenient callers of the gentler sex made their appearance. She usually brought a fictitious message from the Professor, who, having entrapped the young man into his study, proceeded to bore him to death with oxalates and chlorides and sulphuric acids.

Röschen, the poetic daughter, whose slippers were a little down at the heel, displaying to advantage the holes in her stockings, was wont to employ her mother as an accomplice and, on some

pretext or other, lured the American into her garden, where there was the most delightful privacy for sentimental confidences. Gretchen, the youngest daughter, who was obliged to devote herself to domesticity, on account of the inconvenient talents of her sisters, was even at less pains to disguise her designs upon him, but told him frankly that Minchen and Röschen were—well, not at all as nice as they might be.

In one of these bursts of frankness Gretchen also confided to him that Röschen had written to a lady friend in America—a former pupil at the Conservatory who had boarded in the family—and had received from her a complete biography of his humble self, besides a computation of his income and economic prospects. It then required very little ingenuity, on his part, to conjecture why the sisters, in spite of their somewhat ostentatious amiability, frequently appeared to have been at loggerheads just as he entered. He had often heard the word Phoenix pass mysteriously between them, and much as his modesty rebelled, he was forced to the conclusion that he was, himself, the brilliant bird Phoenix, for the possession of which these fair enchantresses were privately contending. He had never before had the audacity to regard himself as a brilliant *parti*, and he had even had a grudge of long standing against Fate for having equipped him so poorly. Measured by the German standard, however, his modest patrimony suggested princely opulence; and its possessor became con-

scious of a certain agreeable expansion, peculiar to capitalists. Smile as he might at the smallness of the social conditions which allowed him to play the rôle of a Cræsus in the fancy of love-sick maids, he could not deny that he found it a pleasant thing to be the object of such tender rivalry. It seemed to add a cubit to his height and two to his self-esteem. He revelled in the sense of his desirability and watched with amusement the innocent manœuvres by which his fair entertainers checkmated each other, and in their zeal occasionally forgot that he, too, was a rational being, endowed with the faculty of criticism. There was another, however, who made this reflection for them; and that was their mamma—the Frau Professorin. She was becoming alarmed at the discord which prevailed in the family; for, being behind the scenes, as it were, she knew a good deal which Grover could not know, and which perhaps it would not have been well for him to know. Thus she found one day in Minchen's room a drawing in which the American, in the character of Paris, was holding above his head an apple, with the inscription “\$5,000 a year;” while three lovely goddesses in scanty attire were stretching out their hands and jumping frantically to reach it. The likenesses were unmistakable and the situation sufficiently pointed to need no commentary. The Frau Professorin was much impressed by it, and her interest, it is needless to say, was enlisted in behalf of the goddesses. She resented the reserved atti-

tude of the shepherd, and was yet anxious to assist him in arriving at a decision. Minchen, now, with her charming talent for making counterfeit cucumbers in wax and sections of hard-boiled eggs, would be just the wife for a practical man like him. She would invest his home with an artistic flavor which he himself would be capable of appreciating, though powerless to supply. And yet Röschen, with her beautiful verses, her nonchalant toilets and her poetic sympathy for improprieties which, in practice, she was careful to shun, might be even more fitted than her sister to lift and ennoble a sordid American soul. It only remained to be considered whether Gretchen, who could grow enthusiastic over the decline of one cent in the price of butter, might not, after all, be a more kindred nature, and therefore suit him best of all.

The Frau Professorin was deeply engaged in these meditations when the maid handed her a small card, upon which was engraved the name, Leonard Grover. To conceal her agitation she threw a glance into the mirror and gave a few decorative touches to her person, before admitting the visitor. Then she put on her company smile and seated herself in a defensive attitude in the large, leather-covered easy-chair. She gave her hand graciously, without rising, to Grover as he entered.

"I hope your buffalo herds are prospering," she said, after the exchange of a few preliminary civilities.

"My buffalo herds!" exclaimed the young man,

laughing. Then, as it suddenly struck him that it might be a joke, he continued with zest : " Oh, yes, indeed, thank you ; they are doing famously. They made quite a sensation as they were driven through the streets of New York, the other day, on their way from Chicago to the Kansas plains."

" Indeed," replied Mrs. Bornholm effusively ; " allow me to congratulate you."

" Thank you," he stammered helplessly.

She had been serious after all.

A minute or two elapsed, during which he did not muster courage to make any further remarks.

" Are the young ladies at home ?" he finally essayed, just as the pause was threatening to become awkward.

" The young ladies," repeated the Frau Professorin, beaming with maternal benevolence ; " permit me to ask to which of them do you refer in particular ?"

" To all three of them," replied the American cheerfully.

" That is very kind of you," she retorted, without, however, the faintest tinge of sarcasm. " I know, even though it is their own mother who says it, that my daughters all deserve the admiration which you so impartially bestow upon them. But the fact is, Mr. Grover—why should I not be perfectly frank and open with you ?—the fact is—no man can marry three girls," she finished rather lamely. She evidently lacked courage to make the revelation which she at first contemplated.

"I am well aware of that, Frau Professorin," was Grover's somewhat aimless response; "and I assure you," he went on heartily, "that I wouldn't think of such a thing; no, not for all the world."

He had an uncomfortable sensation about his ears, after having made this laudable announcement, and he began to cast about for a pretext for taking his leave. His hostess was, however, not disposed to let him escape so easily.

"The Professor and I," she remarked, blandly, "have observed with much satisfaction your devotion to our daughters. We know you to be a man of character, and we know that it would be far from your intentions to trifle with the feelings of the dear, innocent and unsophisticated creatures. But our German custom, as you may not be aware, is to confine one's courtship to one, and not to scatter one's devotion among too many. In other countries that may be different, but as you have come here to learn German manners, I thought I would call your attention to this, and ask you to tell me, in strict confidence, of course, to which one of my daughters you are paying your addresses."

If the ceiling had tumbled down over his head, Grover could not have been more astonished. It was a fact, he had been almost a daily visitor in the Professor's house; he had very likely, in unguarded moments, in order to practice his imperfect German, made complimentary speeches to the three young ladies, individually and collectively;

and in all probability he had, from a German point of view, given the Frau Professorin the right to talk to him as she did. And yet, to submit readily to the consequences of his rash conduct did not for a moment occur to him. His instinct bade him rather resort to a stratagem, which, as he concluded, the dire necessity would justify.

"Frau Professorin," he began solemnly, "I need scarcely assure you that I feel greatly honored by what you have told me. But the fact is, I am not free. I am engaged."

"Engaged!" cried the Frau Professorin, starting forward in her chair. "Why, then, did you not tell me that?"

"It is a secret engagement."

"A secret engagement! And do your parents know of it?"

"They do not."

"And the lady's name?"

"Miss—Miss—Jones."

Grover had no genius for mendacity and he was already beginning to repent of his daring fiction. But Mrs. Bornholm, suddenly possessed with some luminous idea, proceeded mercilessly in her cross-examination, feeling that her position, as the wronged party, gave her a right to trample upon conventionalities.

"Is this Miss Jones musical?" she queried eagerly.

"Yes," he replied vaguely; "that is, I believe so."

"You will excuse me," she went on ; "but I am naturally much interested in this unknown person, because of my interest in you. Would you mind telling me if she is dark or a blonde?"

"She is dark."

"One thing more ; have you written to her recently?"

"No ; not very recently."

"And has she ever said anything to you about coming here?"

"Not a word."

The Professorin arose with a triumphant nod and began to pace the floor.

"Miss Jones is a brunette, musical and rich—I suppose she is rich?" she repeated, with an interrogative glance at Grover.

"She is not poor," he responded feebly.

"Good," said his tormentor fiercely, and nodding again with great emphasis, "very good."

Grover began to feel apprehensive that she had taken leave of her senses. The disappointment, the shock to her cherished hopes, had perhaps been too much for her. He arose a little tremblingly and offered her his hand.

"I am your most obedient servant, Frau Professorin," he remarked, bowing deeply, and backing toward the door.

"We shall no doubt have the pleasure of seeing you soon again, Mr. Grover," she observed, eyeing him with curious significance.

"You are very kind," he murmured, and made haste to vanish.

II.

It was only three days later that Grover received an invitation to dine at Professor Bornholm's. He had spent the intervening period in meditation concerning Mrs. Bornholm's curious behavior. That she had something on her mind was obvious, and he had no doubt that he would to-day discover what it was. He felt confident that she had been plotting against him and had some dramatic surprise in store for him. As he rang the door-bell he had need of all his *sang froid* to quiet his turbulent heart. He was admitted to the inner sanctuary and was greeted with studious cordiality by the three goddesses. They seemed all agitated and expectant, though they were striving to appear unconcerned. They lounged and chatted as people do in the introductory scene of a play, with hidden reference to some plot which has yet to be disclosed. To all appearances the plot had some connection with the door to the Professor's study, which, contrary to custom, was closed. Minchen repeatedly threw furtive glances at it, and Röschen made her determination not to look at it equally conspicuous; only Gretchen was frankly curious and made no effort to disguise it. A strange sense of the unreality of the whole scene, himself included, crept over the young man; he felt like a

man in a play who can murder or make love with equal irresponsibility. He was about to indulge in the latter diversion, when suddenly the mysterious door opened, and the Frau Professorin entered with much dramatic *éclat*, leading a lovely dark-eyed young girl by the hand. The eyes of the three goddesses grew as big as saucers, and Röschén pressed her hand to her heart and nearly fainted from excitement.

"Mr. Grover," said the Frau Professorin, making a most elaborate bow, "allow me to present—Miss Jones."

Under ordinary circumstances the introduction to Miss Jones would have been an agreeable incident in Mr. Grover's career, and nothing further. He had met, he did not know how many hundred charming young ladies, several of whom had borne the name of Jones, and he had never been in the least disconcerted. In the present instance, however, he showed but imperfect control of his emotions. A guilty blush sprang to his cheeks, and he groped vainly in his embarrassment for the proper phrase wherewith to express his pleasure at making the lady's acquaintance. Miss Jones, too, somehow, seemed ill at ease, and gazed at him with flaming cheeks and a puzzled, half-anxious look in her eyes. The Frau Professorin, who had probably expected a different denouement, looked disappointed, and the goddesses whispered to each other and tittered.

"You will excuse me for a few moments," said

the Frau Professorin ; " the house needs my attention."

Having learned all that she wished to know, she could afford to be generous. It was plain that the goddesses had displaced Miss Jones in her lover's heart. Hence his annoyance and embarrassment. She could well appreciate his position and in her heart she began to relent toward him. Miss Jones had evidently, under the pretence of studying music, come to Leipsic, to look after her recreant adorer, whose silence had begun to alarm her. The goddesses, too, who had been initiated into the secret, arrived at similar conclusions, and proceeded to dislike the innocent Miss Jones with much vehemence. It was but with reluctance that they heeded their mother's significant scowl and withdrew in her wake.

" Perhaps," said Miss Jones, drawing a breath of relief as the last of the trains vanished in the doorway, " perhaps you would now have the kindness to tell me what this comedy means."

Grover lifted his eyes and gazed at her ; she was surpassingly lovely. A pair of frank, dark American eyes, half humorously challenging, put at once his embarrassment to flight, and made him feel a delicious nearness and kinship to their fair possessor.

" Miss Jones," he said, answering promptly the humorous gleam in her eyes, " I shall have to make you a regular confession. I didn't have the remotest idea of your existence."

"Nor I of yours," she responded quickly ; "but what has that got to do with the comedy?"

"Everything. You know, I invented you."

"You invented me?"

"Yes, in my dire need, in order to escape from matrimonial persecutions, I invented a *fiancée* in America named Miss Jones. But to be frank, I did not expect you to take me at my word, and turn up over here, in order to regulate my conduct."

"Oh, I see it all," cried Miss Jones, merrily. "You are in the position of a novelist whose heroine suddenly steps out of the book and takes him to task for his fictions."

"But I hope you won't prove a hard task-master," he retorted, gayly. "In consideration of my generosity in making you beautiful and rich, you ought not to betray me."

"Do you mean that I ought to remain your *fiancée*?" she asked, laughing. "I think that is to ask too much of my indulgence."

"You are at liberty to break with me whenever you choose ; but until further notice allow the family to suppose that they are right in their conjecture. You need simply say nothing about it. You know our engagement is secret, and we are not expected to show how fond we are of each other."

"That is very fortunate. However," she continued, lightly, as if pleased with the absurdity of the thought, "my fondness for you will probably never demand any very extravagant expression."

"No, but mine may," was his daring reply ;

“therefore, perhaps, as a measure of self-defence, you ought to break with me at once. Make a scene of some sort, revile me; do anything you choose, only so that the eavesdroppers, who are sure to misunderstand everything except vehemence, get a notion that we have been engaged, but are so no more.”

Miss Jones, who had seated herself in the sofa-corner, leaned her head in her hand and meditated.

“Do you know,” she said, raising the same pretty head abruptly, “your proposition is a very original one? I wonder if a girl was ever before requested to break with a man to whom she had never been engaged. However, Mr. Grover, I am not quite as accommodating as you think. On the whole it suits my purpose very well to be engaged. I have come here for study and have no desire to be courted by students or musicians, of whom there is said to be quite a colony here.”

It was now Grover’s turn to be amazed. He stared at the sweetly demure and sensible little face in bewilderment.

“Then you mean to—you mean to say——” he stammered.

“Yes, I mean to say,” she finished, suppressing the little mischievous gleam in her eye, “that I prefer not to break with you. We will remain engaged.”

The young man’s countenance fell. He began to look unhappy; perhaps Miss Jones was an unscrupulous adventuress who would turn the joke

into earnest and sue him for breach of promise after they got home. To be sure, she looked as innocent as an angel, but it is a notorious fact that women are just the most dangerous in that guise. In escaping Scylla he had plunged headlong into Charybdis. He got up with a painful sense of indecision, walked toward the window, and concluded, after a moment's thought, that he could not, as a man of honor, withdraw from a bargain which he had himself proposed. It would be wiser to abide by it, and to trust to his own ingenuity to extricate him at the proper moment.

"Miss Jones," he said, rather ceremoniously, "I thank you for your kindness."

"Not at all," she retorted, carelessly; "it is an arrangement for mutual convenience. But remember," she added, lifting her index finger in playful threat, "that we are extremely well-bred and undemonstrative."

III.

THE goddesses found it a harder task than they had anticipated to hate Miss Jones. Scarcely twenty-four hours had passed before Gretchen was at her feet, and vowed that she was the German equivalent for a "perfect darling." In return Miss Jones taught her how to make quince jelly,

flavored with the kernels in the stones. Two days sufficed to conciliate Röschen ; and when she discovered that Miss Jones did not positively and unequivocally condemn the homicidal eccentricities of Lucrezia Borgia, she declared with noble enthusiasm that Miss Jones was " a grand soul." As for Minchen, she held out heroically against Miss Jones's blandishments ; but at the end of a week she too succumbed. Miss Jones had complimented her in imperfect German, but with the sweetest of accents, on her wax flowers, and had drawn new designs for her, full of animation and dash. Presently they said " thou" to each other, and Miss Jones, who had been Lulu at home, was metamorphosed into Luischen. Even the Frau Professorin, who at first had put her down as an artful little minx, began to forget her grudge against her. The Professor found it a positive hardship that he was not at liberty to kiss her. But the most amusing thing of the whole affair was that they all became her partisans against her recreant lover, Grover, who had trifled so wantonly with her feelings. They made cautious overtures to condole with her, but, in spite of the tenderest sympathy, found her singularly uncommunicative on this subject. Now the goddesses, who in external charm did not profess to compete with her, had in the first flush of their enthusiasm been quite disposed to sacrifice themselves upon the altar of their devotion ; but, although they could have forgiven any other form of maltreatment, Lulu's apparent

distrust of them wounded them deeply. They had looked forward to delicious nocturnal confidences, when, half disrobed, each should visit the other's boudoir and discuss the fascinating topic from all possible and impossible points of view. That Lulu had proved impervious to all hints of this nature was a slight which could not be pardoned, at least not without due penance on her part. Moreover, to add to their mortification, there seemed daily to be less occasion for sympathy. Lulu was winning Mr. Grover back to his allegiance slowly but surely. He called, now, almost every afternoon, took long walks with her through the Rosenthal, and barring a certain Anglo-Saxon reserve (which in Germany is thought perfectly incomprehensible) behaved in every way as an engaged man should. It was scarcely to be wondered at that the goddesses found such an exhibition of devotion a little bit irritating, and voted Lulu, the happy and victorious, as odious as Lulu, the abandoned, the secretly-grieving, had been lovely and interesting. It was especially Röschen, the admirer of daring unconventionality, who took it into her head that she had been wronged and deceived by the false and heartless Lulu, and she swore—that is to say, she vowed solemnly—that she should yet get even with that sly and demure little arch-fiend. The coveted opportunity did not, however, present itself as soon as her impatience demanded, and while the winter dragged along slowly, alternating delightfully between

frozen mud and liquid mud, Grover's devotion went on steadily deepening, until Miss Jones even interfered with his laboratory practice, mixed herself up in his chemicals, and on one occasion precipitated an explosion which singed his whiskers and damaged his complexion for a month to come. From this experience he drew the wise deduction that love and chemistry are antagonistic forces, and therefore irreconcilable ; but as he could not persuade himself to give up either, it occurred to him to effect a compromise. He would, as far as possible, devote the forenoons to chemistry and the afternoons to love—that is to say, he would devote himself to Miss Jones, and try gently to lure her on to the forbidden topic.

I believe I have said before that demonstrations of affection were strictly prohibited ; but I have not remarked that in the by-laws subsequently drafted by Miss Jones for the regulation of their abnormal relation, oral references to the same interesting topic were likewise forbidden. When Miss Jones had her own way, she usually talked music, and talked intelligently and well. She seemed to find a kind of humorous satisfaction in confining her adorer strictly to practical topics and in ignoring sentimental allusions. If he rebelled against this sort of maltreatment, and became silent and moody, she aggravated the offence by not appearing to notice it. She would then find employment in separating little boys who fought in the street, or in eliciting confidences from old apple-women.

There was something almost fiercely virginal about her, something bordering upon enthusiasm in the way she repelled an attempted incursion upon the forbidden ground. And withal she was so tender and sympathetic toward all mankind, that her wilful obtuseness on the subject of love bore to him the appearance of wanton cruelty. It did not occur to him that she might be acting in self-defence, fearing to give the slightest rein to a feeling which might, on very slight provocation, run away with her. She was the kind of girl which one does not readily think of in connection with the tender passion ; and whose love, perhaps, for this very reason, seems so ineffably precious to him who is trying to win it.

“ Did it ever occur to you,” he said to her one day, as they were walking together under the leafless arches of the Rosenthal, “ that when God saw all that He had made, and ‘ behold it was very good,’ He left woman out ? ”

“ No, I didn’t know it,” she said, with a gleam of amusement.

“ Nevertheless, it is so,” he went on. “ When He said it was all very good, woman was not yet created. After she was made, God said nothing at all.”

“ That was because she was so nice that she needed no commendation,” rejoined Miss Jones promptly.

“ For all that, history shows that she has made a deal of mischief in the world,” said Grover lugu-

briously ; he was feeling piqued and abused at her want of responsiveness to his undisguised admiration.

"History was written by men," was Miss Jones's response.

"But made by women," ejaculated Grover, eager to hold his own in the tilt.

"As you like. I don't think the man was far wrong who said that there was a woman at the bottom of every important event."

"You talk like a book."

"I only wish I had the wit to make one. I would make you men stare if I published my version of the world's history."

"You can do that better without the wit," he retorted recklessly ; then, seeing a little cloud, as of pained surprise, pass over her countenance, he made a motion to seize her hand, but succeeded, instead, in knocking her parasol into the middle of the road. The necessity of recovering it cooled for the moment the passion which had threatened to overmaster him.

"Pardon me," he murmured penitently, as he was again at her side. "I did not mean to hurt your feelings ; but the fact is, I am on such a constant strain to keep my sentiment below the boiling point that I lose my self-control and say things the effect of which I only see after I have said them."

"Don't apologize, please," she said, hurrying on so rapidly that he could only with difficulty

keep pace with her ; then as a perfect godsend, there crossed her line of vision two small boys who were pulling each other's hair and pummelling each other lustily.

" You naughty boy," she ejaculated with much animation, seizing the bigger one by the arm and forcing him to face her, " why do you strike that poor little fellow ?"

" He mixes himself up in my affairs," responded the culprit, defiantly ; then discovering a considerable tuft of his antagonist's hair in his hand, he turned about shamefaced and tried to dispose of it, unperceived. Miss Jones, however (though she was not without sympathy for any one whose affairs were becoming mixed), dexterously caught the descending tuft on the point of her parasol and held it up as proof of his guilt. " What a dreadful little boy you are," she said, reprovingly.

" But I will pummel Anton again," retorted the dreadful little boy, " if he plays ' engaged ' with Tilly Heitmann."

" Plays ' engaged ! ' Ah, then I beg your pardon," said Miss Jones, airily, with a sly little glance at her companion. " Little boys who play engaged deserve to be pummelled."

IV.

IF Prince Bismarck or his big dog had come to town, there could not have been more excitement in the Bornholm family. The three young ladies sat upon a bed, with their hair done up in curl papers, and looked intense. They had hatched a plot of revenge which was worthy of three blonde heads done up in curl-paper. It had been ascertained that Mr. Grover had invited Miss Jones to the artists' carnival, and that Miss Jones had accepted the invitation. He had, moreover, asked the Frau Professorin to chaperone Miss Jones for the occasion, and the Frau Professorin, who was as fond of excitement as a girl, did not have the strength of mind to show him that she resented the slight he had put upon her daughters. She tried to make the daughters believe, of course, that she had ; and they would undoubtedly have taken her word for it, if they hadn't been listening at the key-hole. When taken to task, the Frau Professorin was in such an indulgent mood that she would readily have consented to anything ; and when Röschen proposed that she, too, should go to the masquerade and in exactly the same costume as Miss Jones, her mother only interposed a vague demurrer which was easily overridden. The interesting complications which might arise, if Grover should mis-

take one Daughter of the Rhine for the other, stimulated her romantic fancy and made her eager as a girl to have the plot carried into effect. What was to be accomplished by it, she did not trouble herself to define ; it only gave her a kind of confused satisfaction to think that she was mystifying somebody who had for a long time been mystifying her. Röschen was exactly of Miss Jones's height and their figures closely resembled each other. So when they were masked a microscope would be required to tell them apart.

Röschen, who was full of blissful anticipations, went about during the day embracing people promiscuously from sheer excess of happiness. She could almost have embraced Grover, for though he was, for having afforded her such a glorious opportunity for playing a trick on him. Her adventurous spirit had long yearned for some monumental enterprise, and this had somehow a mysterious atmosphere about it which made it doubly attractive to the admirer of Lucrezia Borgia. As for Miss Jones, she was unsuspecting as a new-born babe, which circumstance heightened the joy of the conspirators, thrilling them with sensations of deep and delightful villainy.

The week before Lent came at last and the reign of Prince Carnival was proclaimed through the streets by medieval heralds in gorgeous attire. The procession was watched from windows and balconies, and at last came the evening with its alluring festivities, including the *bal masque*. The

Frau Professorin, as she flitted from Miss Jones's boudoir to that of her daughter, taking notes of the former's costume for the benefit of the latter, felt like an arch conspirator upon whose coolness and address the fate of empires hung. Miss Jones had had her costumes designed by an expert costumer, and the difficulty was to make Röschen's home-made finery as trim and dazzling as the products of professional skill. This feat was, however, happily accomplished, thanks to Minchen's artistic taste and Gretchen's nimble fingers. The Frau Professorin then slipped with a sigh of relief into her black domino and took her seat at Miss Jones's side in the carriage. Grover, in the guise of King Gunther in the *Nibelungen Lay*, sat opposite, arrayed in a splendid helmet and scarlet cloak, endeavoring to make his legs as unobtrusive as possible. The drive to the *Schützenhaus* was not long, and Miss Jones, muffled up to her very eyes, hopped out of the carriage as lightly as Cinderella from her metamorphosed cucumber. The Frau Professorin, likewise muffled, allowed Grover to assist her up the stairs, and was conducted by him to the door of the dressing-room, where there stood a female Cerberus whose business it was to keep away male intruders. When King Gunther, after doing sentinel duty for half an hour, again caught sight of the swan-maiden, the daughter of Father Rhine, she was so surpassingly lovely that he forgot to inquire for her chaperone. The chaperone, therefore, without difficulty, effected a clandestine retreat,

found her way to a carriage and drove home as fast as the spavined droschke horse would convey her. Twenty minutes later she slipped into the dressing-room at the Schützenhaus, accompanied by a second daughter of Father Rhine, whom that worthy parent himself could scarcely have told from her lately-arrived sister.

The three floors of the enormous house represented the upper, the middle, and the lower world.

The first floor was submarine and subterranean ; cool, dimly-illuminated grottoes, some in basaltic, columnar rock, some in emerald-glowing stalactite, invited all the fantastic creatures of the sea, both fabled and real, who were promenading about on the floor of the deep, to a sweet, life-long siesta in their softly-gleaming recesses. On the second floor luxuriant equatorial palm-groves grew in startling proximity to the snow-laden pines of the North, and a heterogeneous assembly of all nations and ages poured through the resplendent avenues, chatting and playing pranks on each other with Teutonic good humor.

“Let us go to Olympus,” said King Gunther, who was drifting with his snow-maiden through the motley throng. “I may never have another chance of getting there,” he added jocosely.

“I am afraid I should not feel at home there,” answered the daughter of the Rhine ; “you know I belong properly to the lower regions.”

“Then let us go to the lower regions,” retorted the king, gayly. “You needn’t go in search of

the Elysian Fields ; you carry them with you wherever you go."

"Beware, your Majesty," murmured the water-nymph, threateningly. "You are defying Fate. Creatures of my kind are dangerous to trifle with."

"It is you who are trifling, not I," he burst forth ; "with me the joke has long ago become serious."

He felt her arm trembling where it touched his ; under the black fringe of her mask he saw her lips quiver, and her eyes shone with a strange, moist radiance. The crowd of gay maskers surged about them and the music whirled away over their heads unheeded, and broke in showers of rippling sound.

"Listen to me," he whispered boldly, stooping to her level—but in the same moment a heavy hand was laid upon his neck and a burly, gray-bearded Jupiter stood before him with a great train of Olympian attendants.

"I love the daughters of this green earth," said the king of the gods ; "or I should say the green daughters of this black earth," he corrected himself, touching with a caressing hand the green seaweeds of the swan maiden's drapery.

"Excuse me, Father Jupiter," Grover began, knowing well, in spite of his chagrin, that pranks of this kind were perfectly legitimate ; "you mix up the mythologies. This is not a classic nymph, but a Northern swan-maiden."

"By my Olympian beard," cried Jupiter, "that shows your barbaric taste, if you do not pronounce her classic."

"I must insist," Grover replied, "that to your pagan majesty a creature of Northern fable has no existence."

"Then by my Ambrosian locks we will give her existence," quoth the father of gods and men. "Mercury, my son," he cried, pointing with his sceptre to a graceful youth with winged heels and cap, "change me quickly this maiden into something classic, but don't change her too much or you will spoil a divine masterpiece."

Mercury, with winged speed, came forward, waved his wand over the swan-maiden's head, when behold ! she vanished.

"Why, your magic is too potent, you rascal," ejaculated Jupiter. "I didn't tell you to make her invisible."

He flourished his pasteboard sceptre in mock wrath above his head, dealt Mercury a resounding blow on the head, then marched on, followed by his immortal family and a jovial throng of leaf-crowned Bacchantes. Grover remained standing in the middle of the floor, hoping that, as the crowd dispersed, Miss Jones would naturally again seek him. But Miss Jones had apparently no such intention. She persistently remained invisible. At last, thinking that she had meant her allusion to the lower regions as a hint, he made his way to the head of the stairs and descended, not without difficulty, to the first floor. The dancing had commenced above and the multitude of scaly monsters who had haunted the deep, were lured by the airs

of Strauss up into the abodes of the daylight. The submarine world was almost deserted (except by a huge lobster and a shark, who were drinking lemonade) when Grover entered upon his quest for the vanished water-nymph. He investigated two or three grottoes, with no result except to tear his cloak on an exposed nail and knock a hole in his helmet. He was just about to resort to a classical imprecation, when the necessity for it was suddenly dissipated. There stood the daughter of Rhine, wonderful to behold, in sweet converse with her chaperone, the black domino. The young man lost no time in making the ladies aware of his presence.

"I hope you are enjoying yourself, Frau Professorin," he said, as he offered his arm, as a matter of course, to the swan-maiden.

"Oh, yes, I thank you. It takes very little to amuse an old woman like me," she answered, pleasantly. "The music is good and the masks are very entertaining."

"Is there anything I can do for you?" he queried politely, hoping from the bottom of his heart that she would say no.

"Don't you bother about me," was her amiable reply; "I will take care of myself. I only came to see you young people enjoy yourselves."

He had evidently been unjust to the Frau Professorin, he reflected. She was a very charming old lady. He conceived a sudden affection for her. In a very blissful mood he strolled away under the

great festoons of depending sea-weeds, giving now and then a little casual pat to the hand which lightly rested on his arm. By some chance they found themselves in a deserted stalactite cave, where the gas-jets gleamed softly from within emerald cones of glass and spread a strange magic glamour under the pendent arches.

"Let us sit down," said Grover; and the swan-maiden, whose agitation probably forbade her to speak, silently accepted the invitation. "What a transformation love works in a woman," he reflected ecstatically; "who would recognize in this sweet, docile creature the rebellious and headstrong girl of three months ago? I have long wished to tell you," he continued aloud, seizing her hand and drawing her close up to him, "that my life would be barren as a desert without you. You have taught me by your sweet reserve, and your self-respecting coolness, first to esteem you highly, then to admire and at last to love you. Do not think even now that I take your consent for granted. I only hope that love, as strong and deep as mine, cannot fail to find some response. It is imperious, all-conquering; it fears no more resistance."

There was obviously no occasion for such impassioned rhetoric. The swan-maiden had not the faintest idea of offering resistance. She slipped with a soft and charming suppleness into his embrace and received his ecstatic kisses without a murmur of protest. It was not until he made a movement to tear off her mask (whose depending

fringe was a great inconvenience) that she suddenly recovered her senses: with a startled cry she stayed his hand, cast a shy glance about her, jumped up and ran as fast as her feet could carry her. If she had been a real fairy, she could not have made a more rapid and unexpected exit. Grover was utterly dumbfounded. He thought of the old legends about knights who had been loved by mermaids whose kiss was death and their embrace eternal damnation. An uncanny feeling crept over him. But a cheerful second thought soon came to comfort him. He had heard from the best authorities that women were enigmatical and incalculable creatures who were most apt to do what was least expected of them. They had a perfect encyclopedia of eccentricities, if the novelists were to be trusted, and it was not to be expected that his brief acquaintance with the sex should have sufficed to master it. This was a profitable train of thought and one well worth pursuing. Therefore, instead of pursuing his nymph, he leaned back against the wall and pondered.

The nymph, in the meanwhile, after a hurried search below, ran to the dressing-room, where she flung herself weeping into the arms of the black domino.

"What in Heaven's name is the matter, child?" inquired the latter. "Was he rude to you?"

"Not at all," sobbed the nymph; "no-o-ot a-a-at all. Quite the co-o-on-tra-ry."

"What then are you crying for?" asked the domino sympathetically.

"He kissed me, mother; he kissed me," answered the nymph, weeping.

"You ought not to have allowed him to do that," said the Frau Professorin, with mild reproach.

"How could I help it, mother? He talked so beautifully to me. He proposed to me. And I forgot that I was Miss Jones. I was only myself—and—"

A second flood of tears made the rest unintelligible.

"Are you sure he proposed to you, child?" queried the mother, after a pause.

"Quite sure, mother."

"But then he must have known you. For why should he propose to Miss Jones, to whom he is already engaged?"

"That is what makes me so unhappy, mother, for now I shall never know whether I am engaged to him or not."

"Leave that to me, child. I'll find out."



V.

THE next day Grover had an accident, which cost him upward of \$200. He mixed something or other, which made a terrific racket and smashed no end of

retorts and bottles. When he entered the laboratory again after having trimmed off the scorched fringe of his whiskers, he found a big card nailed over his place, with the following inscription: "Smoking and being in love in this laboratory is strictly forbidden." The prohibition in regard to smoking was in print; the rest was interpolated with a paint-brush. Grover looked around wrathfully upon the twenty or thirty backs which reared themselves against shelves of many-colored bottles; they bore all an expression of unconscious innocence.

The hour was approaching when he might without impropriety call upon his *fiancée*. His toilet, however, needed some attention, after his recent experiment with explosives; and he hastened to his rooms to make himself presentable. On the table he found a letter, addressed in the usual high-shouldered characters of American girls. It read as follows:

MY DEAR MR. GROVER: Our engagement for mutual convenience being no longer convenient, I grant your request and hereby break it. I would have done so when you first asked me, only I enjoyed your embarrassment, and had, moreover, a desire to punish you for the liberty you took with a lady whom you had not seen until that moment. I trust we shall remain good friends. If you desire a scene of some sort, in order to advertise our changed relations to the household, you may call upon me this afternoon at three. You will understand that I do this only to save explanations. A quarrel, you know, ends everything; is so intelligible and

satisfactory; precludes questions and discourages curiosity. Accordingly, my dear sir, I will quarrel with you at 3:15 P.M., promptly, and remain,

Sincerely your friend,

LOUISE JONES.

LEIPSIC, March 12, 187-.

Grover read this enigmatical epistle eleven times without deriving the slightest clue to its meaning. He read it aloud and he read it in silence, he analyzed, scrutinized and apostrophized it, but without avail. That feminine caprice could reach such alarming dimensions he had never dreamed. That she should want to break with him the morning after she had become really engaged to him could be accounted for by a variety of reasons. But that she should write him a cool and semi-humorous letter, showing no more agitation than one of Bret Harte's heroes who is about to be hanged—that certainly capped the climax of eccentric behavior. And that, after her passionate protests! But hold on! What did she say yesterday that was so passionate? Curiously enough, he could not remember a word of what she had said. It began slowly to dawn upon him that, during the memorable scene, he had himself done all the talking. She had not uttered a syllable. It was odd, but probably not without precedent. Well, if she wanted her quarrel, she should have it promptly on the hour, and with *éclat*.

At 3:15 o'clock he rang the Professor's door-bell, and was ushered into the drawing-room, where Miss Jones stood smiling sweetly upon him.

"I hope you didn't misunderstand my note," she said, seeing the troubled look in his eyes.

"Misunderstand it!" he ejaculated, with ill-suppressed indignation; "if I had arrived as far as misunderstanding it, I should have had respect for my intellect. I doubt if the seven sages could have interpreted it."

"It wasn't necessary that they should," said Miss Jones imperturbably.

"But suppose they had made love to you?" he began, argumentatively.

"The seven sages *never* made love to me," remarked Miss Jones, perversely.

"But suppose you had kissed them?"

"I *never* kissed them!"

Miss Jones repelled this insinuation with indignant emphasis.

"It is utterly useless to argue with you," he said, pacing the floor in agitation.

"Then I would not try."

"You are cruel, vain, and heartless."

"If those qualities were contagious, I should know where I got them."

"You mean yesterday, when you kissed me!"

"I must decline to listen to such language. You will have the kindness to remember Mr. Grover, that from this moment our acquaintance is at an end."

Miss Jones arose with flaming cheeks and eyes in which the unseen tears trembled; she made Mr. Grover a sweeping courtesy and moved with a good deal of superfluous stateliness toward the door. He

returned her salute, though with much less dignity; then rushed forward to hold her back, but with an impatient gesture she shook off his grasp and hurried out.

"We met to quarrel in jest, and we did it in earnest," he reflected grimly, as he picked up his hat and opened the door. There was a sudden, agitated rustle of skirts in the hall, and he was just in time to see Röschen's back hair vanish into the dining-room.

VI.

BEING engaged is said to be a very delightful thing. You fulfill a pleasant duty to society and one no less pleasant to yourself. In Germany particularly, the engaged state is one of great honor. You advertise the important event in the newspapers, above the marriages and births; you walk abroad with your *fiancée* arm-in-arm (which is an inestimable privilege); you introduce her with much ceremony to your uncles and cousins and aunts; you receive congratulations—in short, you become a sort of public character, until some one else goes and follows your illustrious example. Then you become an old story and lapse into insignificance.

It was this ravishing vision of the engaged state,

with its attendant festivities, which had excited Röschen's imagination. She had seen herself a hundred times on Grover's arm, making the round of her whole circle of acquaintance, and introducing him triumphantly to her pet enemies. He would, of course, at a hint from her, be gracious to those who had been kind to her, and politely snub those who had been disagreeable to her. There was a day of reckoning coming for those who had made sport of Röschen's verses, a day of glorious revenge. But the trouble now was, that, although Röschen looked upon herself as engaged, and respected herself accordingly, she did not have the courage to claim her *fiancé*. She was, as it were, anonymously engaged. The uncertainty of the thing tortured her. She was more than once tempted to sit down and write to Mr. Grover, telling him that it was she to whom he was engaged ; but the thought that he might, in that case, divine her plot always deterred her. That he had quarrelled with Miss Jones hardly simplified the matter ; for a lover's quarrel of that sort is never such a serious affair as the parties involved are apt to think. If only Miss Jones would have the inspiration to go to Berlin or to Stuttgart, or to Halifax, the road to Grover's affections would be comparatively plain sailing. But Miss Jones, in spite of the most pointed hints regarding the superior musical advantages of other cities, persisted in remaining where she was. She practiced with an odious regularity and indefatigable zeal, which knew neither weariness

nor discouragement. She did not grow perceptibly thinner, nor did her complexion show the ravages of sorrow. It was unanimously resolved by the ladies of the household that she was a cold and heartless monster. If it hadn't been for the fact that she paid forty dollars a month (which was put aside for dowries), she would have been told to pack her trunk.

This phase of feeling lasted about three weeks. Then the unfailing charm of Miss Jones's affability began once more to assert itself. Röschen was seized with a sudden desire to kiss her; for she looked so irresistibly cool and lovely as she sat at the breakfast-table sipping her coffee, and propounding her neat little German sentences, which were always correct, though with a faint flavor of "Otto." Röschen felt positive that those calm, intelligent eyes of Miss Jones's read them all like a book; and instead of being indignant at such presumption, Röschen grew repentant. She yearned to fling herself at Miss Jones's feet and confess all her wickedness. She would wear white, with a single red rose in her bosom like *La Sonnambula*. When she thought of all the heroines of history and romance who had renounced the men they loved, she too felt that she could rise to a like heroism in renouncing the man she didn't love; for she did not, for one moment, deceive herself in regard to her sentiment for Grover. It was the engaged state she had been in love with; and he was merely a lay figure, convenient for the occasion—a puppet with whom she

enacted the scenes appropriate to the engaged condition.

She was yet pondering the problem, but had not yet nerved herself for action, when one day she was startled at the sound of Grover's voice in the hall. He handed his card to the girl and inquired for the Frau Professorin. There was a council of war on the spot, and the Frau Professorin sent word that she was "not at home." Grover then asked permission to see "the young ladies." It was a very disappointing message; the plural number was especially disheartening. The sisters, however, were equal to the occasion. Minchen and Gretchen nobly declared that they were "out." Accordingly there was nothing to do, except for Röschen to receive the visitor. She donned her white muslin, stuck a Jacqueminot rose in her bosom, and entered the drawing-room with a quaking heart. The young man shook hands with her without the faintest trace of embarrassment, and begged her to have the kindness to present his "adieux" to the family, as he had concluded to continue his studies in Berlin.

"And you are going to leave Leipsic!" she exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Naturally," he replied: "I leave to-night."

Röschen's heart thumped as if it meant to work its way out through her ribs.

"Now or never!" it said, with an unmistakable plainness; "now or never!"

The Jacqueminot rose fell to the ground; Grover

stooped to pick it up. Had he only said : " May I keep this as a souvenir of our friendship," or something of that sort, she would at once have summoned courage to make her confession. But, instead of that, he gravely handed her back the rose and remarked that he was under great obligation to her father and mother for their kindness to him during his stay in the city. She knew of no appropriate reply to this observation until his silence forced her to invent one. " You have given us no opportunity of late to be either kind or unkind to you," she said, with a blush, which made her feel hot all over.

" The circumstances are at fault, not I," he answered, and got up to take his leave.

" Pardon me," she said, grasping his hand with a desperate clutch ; " I think I heard mother come in. I'll be back in one moment."

Several minutes elapsed, however, but neither Röschen nor the Frau Professorin appeared. Then a sudden sound of sobs was heard in the next room, and Grover, fearing that some one was in distress, hastily opened the door. There stood Miss Jones, grave and benign, stooping over the weeping Röschen, who was dramatically embracing her knees.

" Oh, it was I—it was I who made trouble between you," sobbed the girl, flinging back her head and gazing imploringly up into Miss Jones's face. " You are so good and noble, Louise, can you ever forgive me ? Oh, I wish you would kill me, so that I never could do you any harm again."

" That won't be necessary, my dear," said Miss

Jones, soothingly, stroking the penitent's hair and kissing her forehead; then, catching sight of Grover, she instantly recovered her dignity and disengaged herself from Röschen's embrace. The latter, with a wildly despairing glance at the young man, sprang up and rushed out of the room.

Miss Jones and Grover stood face to face. The reverberation of Röschen's excitement seemed to linger in the room, and they waited for it to pass away before speaking.

"I came to bid you good-bye," he said at last; it did not occur to him that he had not come for that purpose.

"I am happy to have a chance to—to—beg your pardon," replied Miss Jones, with a heroic determination to crucify her pride. "I was harsh and unjust to you. Röschen has told me all."

"I wish she would tell *me* all. I am as much in the dark as ever."

"The girl to—to—whom you proposed in the grotto—was—was—not I," she faltered, grasping the door-knob for support, and gazing into the mirror with a vain hope to hide her blushes.

He drew a long sigh of relief. That intelligence simplified existence enormously. He had had a hopeless feeling, of late, that life was too complex an affair for him to grapple with. Now, as by a flash, order was restored in his chaotic universe. He stood gazing in rapture at Miss Jones's blushing face, which seemed angelic in its purity and its dignified maidenhood. That there dwelt a sweet young soul

behind those blameless features he felt blissfully convinced.

"Miss Jones," he began, "if Miss Röschen has confessed to you, you know what I would have liked to say to you—that night in the grotto. Now, what would you have answered me?"

A little ray of mirth stole over the girl's face, and vanished again.

"I should have said—no," she remarked smilingly.

The orderly universe again tumbled into chaos. She was the veritable Sphinx, and he not the *Œdipus* to read her riddle.

"Then I will bid you good-bye," he managed to stammer, extending an unwilling hand and again withdrawing it.

"Good-bye, Mr. Grover," she said with heartless cheerfulness; "I hope it is not forever."

"I am afraid it is," he murmured sadly.

He took two steps toward the door, and laid his hand on the knob.

"Oh, by the way," ejaculated the girl, with a sudden alarm in her voice; "that question you would have asked me in the grotto—why don't you ask it now?"

"You said you would say no."

He had turned about in unutterable astonishment.

"I didn't say that," she retorted gravely.

"What did you say then?"

“That I should have said No *in the grotto.*”

The scene which followed was of a strictly private and confidential character ; I fear Miss Jones would take me to task if I divulged it.

THE STORY OF TWO LIVES.

BY JULIA SCHAYER.

THE early darkness of a moonless winter night had fallen, nowhere more darkly and coldly than upon a certain small western town, whose houses were huddled together in the valley as if for mutual protection against the fierce winds sweeping through the trackless forests which surrounded it. Here and there the cheerful glow of lamp or fire shone from some uncurtained window, most brightly from the windows of the stores and saloons that occupied the centre of the town, whence issued also fitful sounds of talk and laughter. Otherwise the darkness was complete.

On the outskirts of the town, just at the foot of a steep hill, stood a cottage somewhat more pretentiously built than the others, and surrounded by something of a lawn, laid out with flower-beds and shrubbery, now almost buried in deep drifts of

snow. From one window of this cottage, too, a most heartsome glow streamed out over the snow from a lamp placed, as could be seen, with loving intent upon the window-ledge, and out of the darkness there presently emerged the figure of a man, making his way up the foot-path toward the house, his feet ringing sharply against the hard-trodden snow.

Along one side of the house—planted without doubt to break the force of the northern gales—extended a grove of pines and firs, looking now, in the darkness, like the advance guard of a mighty host with banners slowly waving, and strange instruments giving forth weird, unearthly harmonies. As the man passed this spot he slackened his steps once or twice, and seemed to listen for some sound that had caught his ear, and again, when his foot was already on the lower step of the flight leading to the door, he stopped suddenly, his face turned toward the sombre wall of trees.

The light of the lamp illumined their slender trunks and lower boughs, leaving their tops wrapped in utter darkness. It also threw into strong relief the powerful figure of the man, and projected his shadow, huge, wavering and grotesque, across the intervening space. For an instant another shadow seemed to start forward from the mysterious recesses of the pines as if to meet this one, only to fall back and be gathered into the blackness beyond.

The man shrugged his broad shoulders, and,

turning, entered the house. A fair, slender woman rose from her seat by the open fire, and went to him.

"Oh ! Jamie," she said, "here you are, at last ! I'm so glad ! I was so afraid something had happened ?"

The man threw off his heavy coat with a good-humored laugh.

"Were you afraid I might blow away ?" he asked, straightening his large figure. "Why are you always imagining vain things, like a foolish little wifie ? I'm big enough to take care of myself, eh, lassie ?"

The little wife answered with a smile of loving admiration.

"Come," she said, "supper has been ready a long time, and Bab asleep this half-hour."

She took the lamp from the window and set it on the table, where it shone full on her husband's face. It was a fine, thoroughly English face, with high forehead, brilliant blue eyes, and thick curling hair and beard of a bright golden-brown. A handsome face, and a strong one, but for a womanish fulness of the ruddy lips, and a slight lack of firmness about the chin, which was concealed, however, by the luxuriant beard. It was a face which could, and habitually did, radiate amiability, good cheer, and intelligence, but which had a way of settling at times into stern and melancholy lines, curiously belying his assured carriage, and the sonorous ring of his ready laugh.

Very good to look at was James Dixon, and, as his townsmen unanimously admitted, in spite of his English birth, a good citizen, a shrewd politician, a generous neighbor, and, though at times a little reticent and abstracted, a companionable fellow altogether.

Even now, as he sat at his own table, one might have detected a kind of alertness in his eyes, as of a man ever on his guard, and what seemed almost a studied avoidance of his wife's soft, persistent gaze, as she sat opposite him.

"Sh! What was that?" she suddenly exclaimed. There had been a faint sound outside the window. It had ceased now.

"It was nothing, Bab!" said her husband. "How nervous you are!"

Even as he spoke the sound was repeated, and he himself started now.

"I'm catching your nervousness, Bab," he said, with a short laugh. "The wind is the very deuce to-night."

At that moment a little girl in her nightgown ran out from the adjoining room, and with a gleeful cry sprang into his arms, her long yellow hair spreading itself over his shoulder.

"You see, dear old papa, Bab *wasn't* asleep!" she cried, covering his face with kisses.

"And why *isn't* Bab asleep?" her father said, with an assumption of sternness.

"Because she *can't* sleep. The wind makes such a noise in the pines, and the icicles keep falling off

the eaves, and make such a pretty tinkling on the snow. Do you hear it? Hark!"

"The wind increases fearfully," said the wife, going to the window and drawing the shade. "It is a bitter night."

"Bad enough for anybody to be out in," said Dixon, with the comfortable air of one safely housed. He moved his chair to the fire, and began fondling and playing with the pretty child on his knee. Her little face, however, had grown suddenly grave.

"What is it, pussy?" asked her father; "it looks so serious all at once."

"I was thinking," said the child, slowly; "I was wondering where the poor old man I saw up on the hill to-day would sleep to-night. Such a poor, poor man, so old and sick and ragged."

"Bless the chick! What is she talking about now?"

"Some man she saw to-day when she was on the hill coasting with the others," the mother said. "Some tramp, I suppose."

"I have not heard of any in town," said Dixon, with sudden thoughtfulness. "It isn't the season for tramps. Oh!" he added, carelessly, as the child continued to look in his face, "some worthless old vagabond, I suppose, dearie. Don't fret your little heart about him. He'll find a warm nest in somebody's hay-mow, no doubt." But little Bab shook her head.

"I don't think he was bad," she said, softly, "only very sick and sorry. He asked me my name, and when I told him he laughed out so queer! And then I showed him our house, and told him maybe you'd give him some money, and then he laughed again, and then I—I got scared because the other girls had all run away, and I ran away, too."

Her father had listened with strange intentness. His playfulness was extinguished, and his face looked all at once careworn and troubled.

"You're a silly little lass," he said, after a moment's silence, "and you must not talk to strange men who ask questions. They might carry you off, you know."

He held the child silently a little while longer, and then carried her back to her bed; after which he returned to his seat near the fire. His wife had already seated herself in her low chair, her face bent above the knitting in her hands. Outside the wind howled and roared, but in the room where these two sat all was, to the eye, calm, and sweet, and cosey. The fire glowed, and emitted cheerful little snaps and sparks, the clock ticked, and the knitting-needles clicked, and through the open door the child's soft, regular breathing was distinctly audible. Suddenly the woman stirred and looked up, to find her husband's eyes fixed upon her. Strangely enough they faltered, and turned away, but presently came back to hers again.

"You are very silent to-night, lassie," he said, putting out his hand to stroke her fair girlish head. "Are you ill, or over-tired?"

She shook her head, and dropping the knitting from her hands, clasped them over her husband's knee, and laid her cheek upon them.

"No," she said, softly, "not ill, nor tired. Only somehow I have been thinking all day of old times and—*of him!*"

She dropped her voice to a whisper as she spoke the last words, and her husband felt the hands on his knee tremble. He said nothing, though his face grew dark, and his teeth shut over his lip tightly. "I have been wondering," she went on, "what became of him, Jamie!—if he is still alive, and—" with a break in the soft voice—"if he has forgiven me *my* part in his suffering. Oh, Jamie!" she broke out passionately, throwing her arms about her husband, and raising her lovely, tearful face to his, "Oh, Jamie! I was so young and foolish when I promised to be his wife, and I had not even seen you then! Tell me, Jamie, was I so very, very wicked that I loved you best? Could I help it, Jamie?" She rose and threw herself upon his breast, sobbing like a child. She could not, through her tears, see the working of his face, nor the effort it caused him to speak. He tried to quiet her with caresses and all manner of fond epithets, and at last she lay still, with closed eyes, upon his shoulder.

A tremendous blast swept through the valley,

shaking the cottage to its foundation, and shrieking down the chimney like a cry of despair.

"Great heavens!" Dixon muttered; "what a night!" Then, rousing himself, he added, "Come, lassie. Come rest, and promise me not to give way to such excitement again. You are not strong, and such moods are dangerous for you."

They rose, and stood facing each other before the dying fire.

"One thing," he said, seizing her hands, with a swift change of manner—"one thing, Barbara. Have you ever been sorry that you came with me—that you trusted me?"

She looked at him wonderingly, but with perfect love and trustfulness.

"Never, Jamie!" she said. "Never for one moment."

"And whatever happens," he went on, drawing her closer, "whatever happens, you are sure you never *will* be sorry?"

"Quite sure, Jamie!"

He kissed her again and again, until she laughed at his lover-like vehemence.

"Any one would suppose we were about to be separated for years," she said, playfully.

He laughed, too, but his face and voice were serious, as he said, firmly:

"Nothing shall separate us but death, lassie!"

* * * When Dixon left his house the next morning it was still intensely cold, but the wind

had gone down, and the clumps of evergreens and shrubbery on the lawn were motionless as if painted there.

He stood a moment on the lower step drawing on his fur mittens, and, nodding at the child-face smiling at him from the window, then started to go. But at the first step his foot struck against some object which gave out a metallic sound, and stooping quickly, he raised from the snow a small pistol. One glance showed him that it was in perfect order, and every barrel loaded.

He remained for some time turning this object over and over in his hand, his nether lip drawn between his teeth. At last he glanced toward the window. The child was no longer there, but he saw now, what had before escaped his notice, that the snow beneath the window was broken and trodden by a man's footprints. With a smothered exclamation Dixon bent an instant above these tracks, and then began tracing them carefully. He found where they led from the group of pines to the window ; he found where they had first approached the house across the open fields from the hill beyond, direct and even, as of one with a fixed purpose ; he found also where they had turned from the window in long, regular strides as of one in flight. These he followed to the foot of the hill, and across to the other side, where they seemed to lose themselves in the trackless forest. He stood here again for some moments, an ashy ring forming itself about his lips. Then, with a deep breath,

he set his teeth together, thrust the pistol into his pocket, and turned toward the town. It was scarcely awake as yet. Smoke curled lazily upward from the chimneys, but hardly any one was stirring. Even about the door of that great commercial emporium known far and near as "Buckey's," the regular loafers had as yet no representative; and here, as elsewhere, the snow, which had drifted across the steps, was undisturbed.

A little beyond "Buckey's" stood a neat frame structure, across whose entrance stretched a sign bearing the inscription :

"James Dixon, Justice of the Peace."

This building Dixon entered. A boy who was steaming himself at the great stove in the centre of the room looked up with a duck of the head as the proprietor of the office entered, paying no further attention as he proceeded to divest himself of his outer garments and seat himself at his desk.

Apparently business at this time of the year was not pressing, for, beyond arranging some papers with legal headings, and glancing over a newspaper or two, Dixon did no work. The most of the time he sat industriously smoking, his eyes set upon the uncheerful winter landscape without. Once, when the boy was absent he took from his breast-pocket the pistol, and examined it again with a knitted brow; after which he locked it in a drawer of the desk, and resumed his pipe.

At noon he sent the boy away, and, locking the office-door, turned his face homeward. The town

was awake now, or as much so as it was likely to be. A few sleighs and sleds were standing before the doors of the saloons, and it appeared to Dixon that an unwonted excitement prevailed in and about "Buckey's," all the men visible being gathered before the familiar red door, and all talking at once in even louder tones than usual.

As Dixon came nearer, two of the men started forward and approached him.

"We was jest a-comin' fur ye, Square," said the foremost. "Thar's a stranger in thar as won't give no account of himself, an' we was thinkin'——"

"Oh, quit foolin'," said the other, roughly. "It's nothing but a dead tramp. That's all, Square," and he shifted his quid to the other side of his mouth, composedly.

Dixon changed countenance. A little tremor ran through his frame.

"A tramp?" he repeated. "Dead?"

"Dead as a door-nail!" the man answered. "Froze brittle. Small an' his boy found him this mornin' in Crosse's timber."

They started on, giving Dixon precedence. It appeared to the men that he showed very small interest, and unaccountable deliberation. Even when they had reached Buckey's, he mounted the steps slowly, standing an instant with his hands on the latch, as if indifferent, or reluctant. At last, with another impatient movement of the shoulders, he opened the door and went in. The crowd

of rough, bearded men who filled the space between the counters and the stove, nodded respectfully and fell back.

That which they had surrounded lay stretched stark and stiff upon the bare floor. It was the body of a man which had been at some time sturdy and strong. Now it was pinched and wasted, and clad in thin, worn garments, and shoes that seemed ready to drop from the naked, frost-bitten feet. The unkempt iron-gray hair and beard gave the face, at first glance, a look of wildness, but, observing more closely, one saw that the features, though heavy, were not uncomely, and wore a look of extreme suffering, which even death had not been able to efface.

"Looks like a Inglishman, eh, Square?" said one of the men present.

Dixon did not seem to have heard him. He stood looking down upon the dead man without moving or speaking. The ashy ring had again shown itself about his lips, and was creeping slowly over his face.

"It's the first as I've seen in these parts for many a year," said another. "Our county ain't pop'lar with that kind," he added, grimly.

"He took a mighty oncomfortable time o' year fur trampin'," said a blear-eyed vagabond near the stove. "I've ben meditat'in' somethin' o' the kind myself, but reckon I'll wait fur warm weather. My constitution is delikit."

"*Don't* wait for warm weather, Shanks," said

Buckey himself, leaning comfortably across the counter. "They'll make it warm enough for *you*, whenever ye go!"

At the laugh which followed this sally, Dixon started and looked around him, in a dazed sort of way. The laugh died out suddenly, and the men sank into a shame-faced silence, but even now he did not speak.

"They's somethin' in his breast pocket, Square," said one of them, bending over the body. "Somethin' like a book, or a——"

"Take it out, Slater," said Dixon, in a voice at which all present started, and looked at him curiously.

The man did as ordered, producing from the tattered pocket a small, soiled blank-book, whose pages appeared to be closely written. He handed it to Dixon, who took it mechanically, and, opening it, appeared to glance at the contents at random.

Those nearest him saw his fingers close suddenly upon the book, and heard the sharp indrawn breath which he shut back between his teeth. He put his hand to his head again, and held it there while his eyes swept over the group of respectful but inquisitive faces.

"There is something here," he said, holding the book before him, and speaking in the voice which had once before made them start—"there is something here I would like to look into. Let the—the body lie here until I come back."

There was a murmur of assent, and he turned and left the store. They saw him stand a moment on the step outside, his face toward home. Then he turned in the opposite direction and disappeared.

Dixon entered his office, locked the door, and flung himself into his chair, the little book open before him. The ashen ring had widened until his whole face was like that of the dead. Not a muscle of his rigid face stirred as with desperate eyes he read on and on. Only the faint rustle of the leaves as he turned the pages, and his heavy breathing broke the silence. And this is what he read :

THE DEAD MAN'S STORY.

W——, 187-.

My wanderings are almost over. Exposure and misery have nearly finished their work. I feel my strength ebbing from day to day, and I know that I must soon die, and die, it may be, with the purpose which has sustained me all these years unattained. Knowing this, I have determined to write in this book the story of my life, hoping that when I am dead—"found dead," it may be, like a tramp or vagabond—some pitying eye may fall upon these words and give me decent burial, for something in me rebels at being thrown like a dog into an outcast's grave. Here is the story as I have repeated it over and over to myself hundreds of times during the weary years that have passed :

I was accounted a quiet, good-natured fellow in the little town in England where I was born and lived before I came to this country. I was slow of speech, but I had received a fair education, and had a turn for reading, and for scribbling down my thoughts. I was a printer by trade, like my father before me. He died when I was a lad of sixteen, leaving me to care for the mother, and for Barbara. She was the daughter of our nearest neighbor, and from the time she could walk we were always together. When she was still very young her parents died, and their children were scattered, and Barbara came to us. I was the only child left of many, and my mother gladly welcomed her as a daughter. We lived together for years as brother and sister, but I was not long in finding out that my love for Barbara passed that of any brother, and when she was fifteen we became engaged.

From that day I had but one ambition in life—to put myself into circumstances where I could make her my wife, for I had vowed in my heart not to do so until I could offer her something more than the hard lot of a common mechanic's wife. It seemed to me she was born for something better. She was a real English beauty, with chestnut hair falling far below her waist, and a skin like milk and roses. A gay, bright creature she was, fond of music and dancing and company; fond of me too, as I believe still, though I *was* slow and silent and awkward; trusting in me, leaning upon

me, and confiding in me every thought of her innocent heart.

I did not care for gay scenes myself, but I often went with Barbara to such entertainments as the place afforded, and enjoyed seeing her happy, and admired, and courted.

When Barbara was about eighteen years old a young man came to our place. I will not write his name here—there is no need. He was London-born and bred, and, though a printer like myself, far cleverer, and full of ambitious schemes of which I never dreamed. He was a handsome, dashing fellow, with finer ways than we were used to. He could do a little of everything, and very well too. He sang, and played the guitar, and danced like a Frenchman, and in no time had won his way with every one. The women folks, of course, were carried away with him.

The first time he saw Barbara was at a dance where I had taken her. He pointed her out to me, and asked her name. I may have betrayed something of my love and pride as I answered, for he gave me a quick, curious look, and a moment later asked for an introduction to her. After that they danced together a good deal, and every one was saying what a handsome couple they made.

Soon after this the mother became ailing and fretted at being left alone of evenings, so I often stayed with her while Barbara danced at some neighbor's house or public assembly with the newcomer.

I never had a thought of jealousy, not even when the fellows in the shop began chaffing me for letting my sweetheart run about with another man, for I trusted Barbara, and was not he my friend? Unlike as we were, had he not singled me out from all the others, and made me his confidant and companion on all occasions?

Even after I had left the shop, having at last secured the position as book-keeper at the — Mills which I had for years been working for, he kept up the former intimacy, and often I found him waiting for me when I returned late from my work, and I liked nothing so well as to sit and smoke, and listen to him and Barbara, their singing, and laughter, and foolish talk.

It went on so for a good while. I was beginning to lay by money, and the time for our marriage was not far off. But a strike broke out just then among the spinners. I had known it was coming, and done what I could to prevent it, knowing what the result would be, but it was all in vain. Their wrongs were too real and of too long standing. The crisis came; the mills were closed; for a few days the strikers believed they would win the day.

At the end of a week the mills opened with a new set of operatives hired from a neighboring town. Riots and bloodshed followed. Those were troublous times. I could not keep my hand from giving aid to the suffering wives and children of men I had lived among all my life. I took no thought for consequences. One day I received my

discharge. I was dazed by the cruel blow ; I went about like a man walking in his sleep.

One night as I walked the streets, some one I met told me that my friend, the man I am writing of, was ill. I went at once to his room, which was in the building over the printing office where he had now gotten to be foreman. I found him restless and feverish, and at his request I stayed with him until the small hours of the night. Then I went home. No one saw me going in or out of his room, but I met two or three stragglers on my way home. I had been half an hour in bed when an alarm of fire was sounded, and I rose and joined the crowd in the streets. The — Mills were burning, and in a short time were burned to the ground. The same day I was arrested on a charge of having set the fire. I laughed at the charge. My friend, who was now delirious with fever, would soon put me right. My trial was deferred until he was able to appear. When the day came at last, he stood up, white and haggard, in that crowded court-room, and swore he had not seen me at all on the night I had spent with him—the night of the fire. There were other things against me : my known friendship for the leaders of the strike, my discharge, my absence from home at the time the fire must have been started, and other small but damning evidence. I was convicted, and sentenced to transportation. I saw my old mother fall as if dead ! I saw Barbara's white face bending over her ; plainer than all, I saw that man who had

been my friend, and the look he gave the woman who was to have been my wife ! Something leaped into life within me then—something which has never died. If I could have reached him then and there !

I do not suppose twenty people in the town believed me guilty. I do not believe the jury which convicted me, nor the judge who sentenced me, believed me guilty ; but everything was against me, except my past life, and that had no weight with the law. My sentence was commuted to a term of years in the penitentiary. I will not write of my prison-life. Three months after it began I received a letter from Barbara, telling me of my mother's death, bidding me keep up courage, and pray, but saying nothing of herself, or of *him*.

At the end of five years came freedom. The real criminals had been discovered, and I was discharged. The man who went out of that prison door was not the man who had entered it. The law, conscious of the fact that no human power can make amends to an innocent man for a punishment unjustly inflicted, takes no notice of it. It is dumb before a wrong so monstrous. I went back to my native town. Every hand was stretched out to me. My old employers at the mill would have put me in my old place, but I refused. I inquired for Barbara and for him. They had married after my mother's death and gone, it was said, to America. I took measures to prove this ; then I went to work at my old trade. I worked day and night, and

lived on next to nothing. At the end of a year I had what I wanted. A fortnight later I was in New York.

My plan was to work my way over the country—to work and watch. I felt sure that the man I was looking for would work at his trade, too, and I believed in time I should get on his track. I stayed several months in New York, and found plenty to do. The only fault found with me was my love of change. “You know what is said of ‘rolling stones,’ Jordan,” my employers would say, as I was about to leave. “It isn’t moss-gathering I am after,” I would answer.

I took no man into my confidence, but I lost no chance of getting acquainted with men of our craft. I frequented places where they congregated, set them to talking, asking them as to Englishmen they had known, etc.

“You are looking for some one, Jordan,” was said more than once.

“Maybe I am,” I would answer.

Once a man who had been looking on and listening, said, with a laugh, “I’m devilish glad it ain’t me you’re looking for, Jordan!” And I knew well enough what he meant.

I have wandered south and west, I have thought many a time I was on the right trail, but it has come to naught so far. About a year ago I fell ill, and was a long time in a hospital. When I was discharged I was a mere wreck. Something was the matter with my heart, they said. I have not

been able to work long at a time since. Such work as I get is given me out of compassion.

At thirty-five I have the face and gait of a feeble man of sixty. When I catch a glimpse of my reflection, I am like a stranger in my own eyes, yet feeble as is my body, the *motive* for which I live is strong within me.

By every glimpse into a warm, cosey fireside where the happy husband and wife and children gather, I renew my vow to find the man who wrecked my life, to meet him face to face, to unmask his villainy, to let him see Barbara, his wife, turn from him in horror and loathing, to have his craven life at last! This desire, continually thwarted, never extinguished, upholds me. It is meat, and drink, and clothing to my famished, shivering body. I must be the chosen instrument of God's vengeance, or I should have died of sheer despair before now. Die? No, not yet. I must press on. Who knows but I may be even now near the goal?

March, 187-.

I am stranded here in a little western town where a false trail has led me. I am growing weaker. A slow fever is burning out my life. The last three months have been terrible. I have had but little work, and I have suffered—oh my God, how I have suffered—from cold and hunger.

My appearance is such that I am taken for a tramp. I have barely escaped arrest several times

as a suspicious character. It is hard for me to see little children run away at my approach, and women turn pale and tremble as they open the door to me. So far I have only asked for work, though I have often slept supperless in sheds and barns. I have found a little work at my old trade. When it is done I shall push on. What with this fever in my blood, and the deadly longing in my heart, I have no rest.

December, 187-.

I have found a new trail—the clearest I have come across. Chance threw into my hand a newspaper in which the name of him I am seeking is mentioned, *honorably* mentioned, in connection with the politics of a certain State. It may not be he. Another man may bear the same name, but new life has entered my veins since I saw it. Last night I dreamed I had my hand on his throat.

December, 187-.

I have found him ! From this hill-top where I am sitting I see the town where he lives in comfort and honor—the very house that shelters him. The smoke of his fire comes up to me. It is a bitter cold day, and I have eaten nothing, but I feel neither cold nor hunger. From the day when I started on this last sure trail everything has been against me. I have been sick ; I have found no work ; I have begged my bread ; I have been hunted for the crimes of others ; I have borne

abuse, scorn, insult. The very lowest depth of misery and humiliation has been reached. But that is all nothing : my purpose is to be accomplished. The end is near.

I reached this spot to-day at noon, and sat down here to rest a bit before going down into the town to make assurance sure. Soon after, a party of children came up the hill with their sleds. When they saw me they ran, except one little lass of seven or eight. She stood still and looked at me, as if too scared to move. I know I am terrible to look at—I have seen my face in pools of water as I drank—but I would not fright the child, and I tried to make my voice gentle as I said :

“ Don’t be scared, little one ; I won’t hurt you.”

Just then the sun came out of a cloud and struck across her face and hair. I cried out, I could not help it. It was Barbara’s face and hair, but the eyes were *his*.

“ Stop !” I said, as the child started off. “ What is your name ?”

“ Barbara,” she answered, and then : “ If you are hungry,” she said, “ mamma will give you something to eat. We live down yonder in the brown cottage.”

I stared at her, shutting my teeth together.

“ Maybe papa would give you some money,” she said again. “ He is such a good man, my papa is.”

I burst into a laugh. The little lass’s fear came back, and she turned and ran away.

I have not moved from the spot since she left me. I have carefully cleaned and loaded the weapon I have carried so long—the instrument in my hand of God's vengeance. Before another sun rises it will be over.

I sit and look at the cottage the child pointed out. I can see that it is neat and comfortable. The sun is going down, and the windows on this side are red as blood. So is all the snow between this place and that. I shall wait until night. I feel no fear, no remorse ; and yet, if the child had not had *his* eyes——

Meanwhile the men who were waiting for Dixon's return became a little restive, as the minutes dragged along and he did not appear. Even those ready means of beguiling time common to men of their stamp—the telling of highly-seasoned and *apropos* stories interspersed with frequent libations, began to pall. Some of them stole away to their neglected dinners, returning shortly with a renewed sense of wonder as they still found him absent.

And the stark figure lay there in their midst, itself for the time forgotten in the stories and conjectures its presence had evoked, the faint smile frozen on its unshaven lips, the half-open eyes fixed seemingly upon the door with a terrible intentness.

At last one of the men who was near a window overlooking the street, said :

"He's comin'!" and a moment or two later, "I swear, he's paler'n the dead man his self!"

"Mebbe it's his long-lost brother!" suggested the vagabond Shanks, who was given to pleasant-ries of this sort.

"He was always that a way!" declared another. "They's men as can't look at a corpse without turnin' white around the gills, an' Dixon's one on 'em! I've seen him a-fore. An' he ain't no coward, neither!"

"No! *He* ain't no coward!" chorused the others, and a moment or two later Dixon pushed open the door and came in. Every man's eye was drawn to his face, but he saw no one. He looked straight before him into space.

"Buckey," he said, addressing that worthy in one of his many capacities, that of undertaker, "I knew this—man. Make arrangements to have the—the body brought to my house, at once, and to have the funeral from there to-morrow morning."

He paused a moment, a kind of click in his throat, and then added, "Let every man and woman who knows me be present."

He turned and went out, and they saw him, with his head sunk on his breast, walking homeward.

At the appointed hour the small front room of Dixon's cottage was filled with men and women, drawn thither in part through deference to his expressed desire, in part through curiosity excited by the rumors which had filled the air since the day before.

The body of the stranger, now shrouded and coffined, rested upon a bier in the centre of the room. At its head sat the minister of the one church of which the town could boast.

The people were very silent, even more so than the occasion seemed to warrant, but they studied each other's faces furtively, as if each sought in the other some clue to the mystery which was to himself impenetrable.

They were plain, hard-working people, and, for the most part, decent, law-abiding citizens. The man in whose house they were assembled had been with them for years. What he had been before he came among them they had never asked. It may be that some of them had something in their own past they would fain have forgotten. He had won their respect and confidence, and in time their affection, for, as has been said, he was generous, brave and helpful. He had been their chosen leader. They had honored him with such small honors as they had to bestow, and as his reputation as a political writer and speaker spread, other and higher honors were more than hinted at.

To-day they were disturbed and restless, as if under the shadow of some impending change or calamity. They waited in a tense, constrained silence for what might happen. At length a door opened noiselessly and Dixon stood before them. A thrill ran through every breast as they saw him. A score of years might have passed over him, and not have wrought the change of this one night.

The assured carriage, the look of strength and power and pride had vanished. The broad shoulders stooped. The hair was matted over his brow, the features pinched and livid.

He let his eyes wander over the faces of those present a moment ; then, in a strained, husky voice, began speaking.

“ You who have been my friends,” he said, “ who for years have given me your respect and confidence and support, look at the man lying there in his coffin ! *That is my work !*”

He paused. Every face blanched perceptibly. No one moved, but all hung, with parted lips, upon the next words that strange, toneless voice might utter. It began again :

“ That man was my friend, and I was his ; but he possessed one thing I wanted—the love of a woman, his betrothed wife. Up to the time I began to covet this woman’s love, I was as truly his friend as he was mine. Up to the hour when the devil put it into my power to swear away his good name I had never dreamed of being false to him, though I had reason to believe that the woman I loved cared for him only as a sister might, and I might have fairly won her. He was accused of a crime, and my word might have cleared him. Instead of that, it convicted him. On my false testimony he went, an innocent man, to prison, and I came with the woman I had perjured my soul to win as my wife to this country.

“ For years I tried to forget. I could not. My

sin followed me day and night, and poisoned every moment of my existence. At last I made up my mind to go back to the old place and give myself up, and make amends for what I had done. I left my wife and child here, and worked my passage back to England. I was too late. Justice had been done so far as human law could do it. The real criminals had been found, and he I had wronged was free. And he had gone to America. I knew what for. He was slow to anger, but, when once aroused, his anger was terrible. I knew that he was seeking me, and I knew that he would find me. From that time I never lay down to sleep but my last thought was, 'It may be to-morrow!' I never rose in the morning that I did not say to myself, 'Perhaps it may be to-day!' For years I have lived with this spectre of vengeance at my elbow. What my life has been since I came among you, you think you know. What it really has been, no mortal man can guess. At last, what was to be came to pass. He found me."

A shudder shook the speaker, and he was silent an instant. Then he continued :

"He found me. I have read in his own handwriting *how* he found me, and all the history of his ruined life. He has stood at my window with my life in his hands, and at the last moment—God alone knows why, perhaps for the sake of the woman he loved and her child—he has spared my life. I have seen the print of his feet where he must have stood outside in the bitter cold looking

in upon my warmth and comfort. I have found the very weapon with which he would have taken my life lying at my door where he must have flung it, and I have traced his steps where he must have fled across the field to hide himself in the darkness, only to die almost within a stone's-throw of this house. He had sworn to meet me face to face, and it was to be—like this ! The hand of God was in it. I might have kept silent. The secret was in my hands alone. No human law could reach me now that his tongue is silent ; but lying there, as he lay yesterday, dead, in rags, he has spoken as no living man could speak ! He has accused and convicted and sentenced me, as no human law could have done !”

He ceased as abruptly as he had begun. He stood there, broken, self-accused, in a humiliation so deep, a despair so utter, that the sternest of his listeners was moved to a compassion which fought desperately with the horror his story had inspired. Involuntarily, unconsciously, those nearest him had shrunk away until he stood apart, alone, at the foot of the coffin, from which the dead, half-opened eyes seem to hold him in a stony, unrelenting stare.

For a time there was a complete, terrible silence. Then the minister, who had sat all this time at the head of the coffin, his venerable head bowed upon his hands, rose, and went across the room, his mild face illumined with a look of divine pity. He laid his withered hands upon Dixon's folded arms, and spoke :

“ ‘ When I kept silence my bones waxed old. Day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me.

“ ‘ Mine iniquities are gone over my head, as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. I am troubled. I am bowed down greatly. My sorrow is continually before me. I will declare my iniquity. I will be sorry for my sin. Forsake me not, O Lord ! Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation ! ’ ”

All heads were bowed. From the corner where the women sat together came the sound of suppressed sobbing.

The minister went back to his place, and folding his hands above the coffin, said :

“ Let us pray.”

When the prayer was ended, the coffin was closed, and, followed by the entire assemblage, was borne to the place prepared for it.

The day was mild. A dense, soft snow was falling, through which the figures of men and women moved with phantasmal noiselessness. Dixon walked foremost by the side of the clergyman. When all was over, he raised his eyes from the icy clods of the new-made grave. The venerable man stood silent at its foot. Otherwise he was alone.

At the door of his cottage, the old man, too, left him, with a strong, long hand-pressure. He stood for some time before the door. The air was thick with the great flakes of snow, the footprints beneath the window and across the frozen field were

already hidden from sight, but he knew that they were there, and always would be.

At last, very slowly and heavily, he turned and went into the house. It was cold and silent. The door of the front room stood open, and the chairs were as the people had left them. He went into the room and tried to restore things to their customary appearance. With a visible shudder he crossed the middle of the room where the coffin had stood, and threw open the windows. Then he went out, closing the door carefully. In the passage he listened a moment, but it was still silent. He knew that the child had been sent to a neighbor's, and that he should find his wife in her own room.

He found her sitting by the window. She did not move as he entered, and he stood near her for some moments waiting vainly for some sign that she was aware of his presence. Then he spoke her name.

She turned slightly toward him. That was all.

Dixon threw himself upon a chair near her, with a groan.

"Barbara!" he cried, in a voice of anguish, "Barbara! Is this all you have to give me?"

She turned toward him a wan, drawn face with dazed, tearless eyes that seemed to look at him as from afar off.

"I trusted you so completely," she said, her words falling as slowly and coldly as the snowflakes outside, "so completely! I never knew

that such things *could* be ! I shall never forgive myself that I believed him guilty, never ! I shall never forgive myself that I helped to drive him to despair. I shall never forgive——”

“ Don’t say it, Barbara ! For *God’s* sake, don’t say it !” her husband cried, throwing himself at her feet, and burying his face upon her lap. He felt her whole body recoil from his touch, and shrank back, hiding his face upon his arms.

“ I was such a child,” she went on, “ such a foolish, weak child—but I might have known better. I shall never forgive myself !”

Dixon groaned aloud. “ But I am ready, quite ready,” she continued in the same voice.

“ Ready ?”

He started up, and stared at her wildly. He feared for her reason.

“ Yes,” she said, “ ready to go with you, away from here, anywhere, at any time. You cannot stay here ?”

There was something in her voice and face impossible to describe—a deadly apathy, an icy coldness, a stony acceptance of a hopeless situation.

For the first time in twenty-four hours the color returned to Dixon’s face. His eyes flashed, his teeth were set, as he sprang to his feet. In that instant he set his face against the power that would fling him into bottomless abysses of shame and ruin.

“ I *will* stay here !” he said, fiercely. “ I will *not* fly again ! The worst that could happen *has*

happened. Where should I go to escape my fate? Why should I attempt it? No! I swear to live my life here, and to live it as a man should live with God's help, and *yours*, Barbara!" he implored. "Will you drive me to despair? Will you forsake me, or will you help me?"

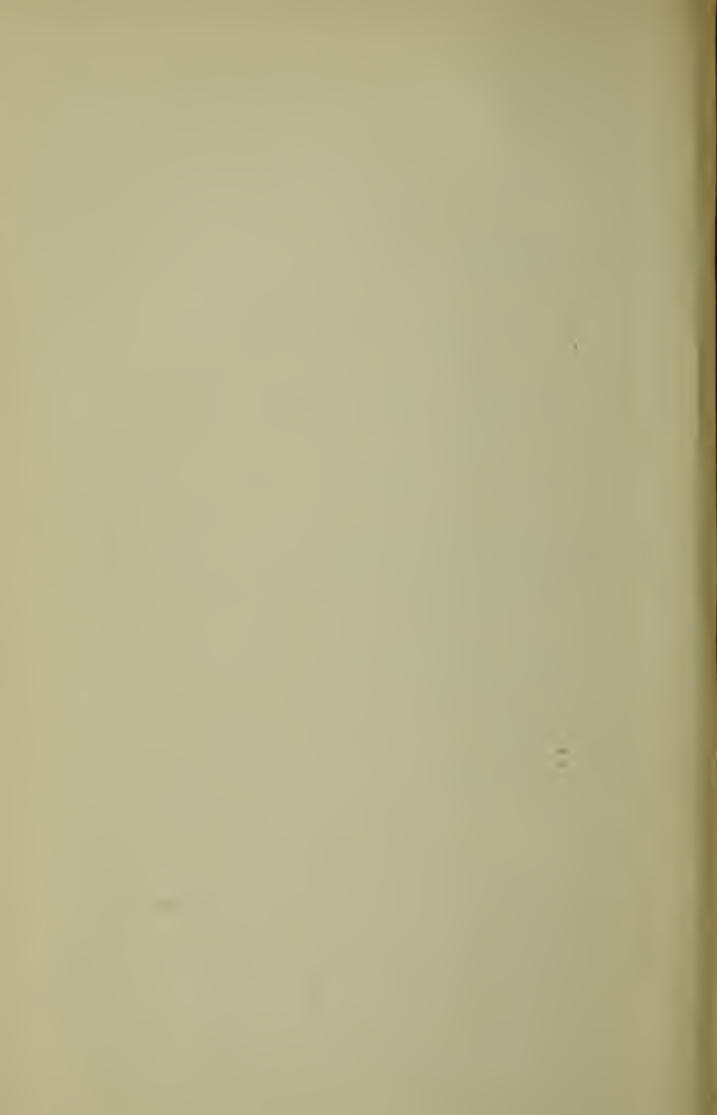
A shiver shook the woman's slight form, and she passed her hand across her eyes once or twice, before reaching it toward him. A piteous smile quivered across her lips, but her eyes did not seek his.

He seized her hand, and again threw himself before her.

"I am your wife, Jamie," she said, gently. "Your wife, for better or for worse. Whatever I can do to help you, I will do."

Then at last the eyes of the two met in a long, long gaze, and in that moment Dixon read his fate.

Everything else might, and did, come back to him—the esteem and confidence of his fellow-men, worldly success, aye, and the blessing of God upon the work to which he dedicated the best portion of his remaining years—the raising up of the fallen and unfortunate; all these things came to him in time, but one thing he forever missed—the old look of perfect, unquestioning trust in one woman's eyes, the eyes of the woman for whose sake he had sinned.



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